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The Security Council,

Recalling its previous resolutions, in particular 2359 (2017), 2295 (2016) and 2100 (2013), and its press statements, including of 23 May 2017, concerning the situation in Mali,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Mali, emphasizing that the Malian authorities have primary responsibility for the provision of stability and security throughout the territory of Mali, and underscoring the importance of achieving national ownership of peace- and security-related initiatives,

Reaffirming the basic principles of peacekeeping, including consent of the parties, impartiality, and non-use of force, except in self-defence and defence of the mandate, and recognizing that the mandate of each peacekeeping mission is specific to the need and situation of the country concerned, and also recalling its Presidential Statement of 25 November 2015 (S/PRST/2015/22),

Recognizing the legitimate aspiration of all Malian citizens to enjoy lasting peace and development,

Recognizing that the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali ("the Agreement") signed in 2015 by the Government of Mali, the Plateforme coalition of armed groups, and the Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad coalition of armed groups, and its continued implementation, represents a historic opportunity to achieve lasting peace in Mali,

Considering the Agreement as balanced and comprehensive, aiming to address the political, institutional, governance, security, development and reconciliation dimensions of the crisis in Mali, respecting the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Malian State,

Underscoring that the responsibility for the full and effective implementation of the Agreement, which has to be Malian-led and Malian-owned, rests with the Government of Mali, the Plateforme and Coordination armed groups, and is crucial to contribute to lasting peace in Mali, drawing lessons from previous peace agreements,

Recognizing the recent progress achieved for the implementation of the Agreement, including the holding of a Conference d'Entente nationale in March 2017 and the establishment of all interim administrations in the North, while expressing its deep concern over the persistent delays for its full implementation



two years after it was concluded, and *highlighting* the pressing need to deliver tangible and visible peace dividends to the population in the North and other parts of Mali in order to keep the momentum of the Agreement,

Urging the Government of Mali, the *Plateforme* and *Coordination* armed groups to take urgent and concrete action to fully and sincerely deliver on their obligations under the Agreement without further delay, including obligations not implemented during the Interim period, in particular regarding the concrete activities of the interim authorities installed in the northern regions, the reform of the security sector, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, the revision of the constitution through an inclusive and consultative dialogue, the fight against impunity as well as a genuine reconciliation process,

Stressing the need for the Government of Mali, the *Plateforme* and *Coordination* armed groups, following the *Conference d'Entente nationale*, to make further progress towards the agreement and adoption of a Charter for Peace, Unity and National Reconciliation, through an inclusive and consultative dialogue,

Taking note of the upcoming holding of district, regional, legislative and presidential elections, municipal by-elections and a constitutional referendum in 2017 and 2018, *stressing the need* for these elections to be free, fair and inclusive, and *further stressing* the need to ensure adequate coordination of the electoral process with the implementation of the Agreement,

Welcoming the adoption by the Government of Mali, in January 2016, of Mali's second National Action Plan for the implementation of the Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), *further welcoming* in this regard the adoption by the Government of Mali, in December 2015, of a law requiring a 30 per cent quota for women in national institutions, and *encouraging* its implementation,

Affirming its intention to facilitate, support and follow closely the implementation of the Agreement, *commending* the role played by Algeria and other members of the international mediation team to assist the Malian parties to implement the Agreement, and *emphasizing* the need for increased engagement by the members of the international mediation team,

Expressing concern about the volatile security situation, especially the expansion of terrorist and other criminal activities into central and southern Mali as well as the intensification of intercommunal violence in the Centre of Mali,

Noting that the slow progress in the implementation of the Agreement, particularly its defence and security provisions, as well as the delayed restructuring of the security sector, have hampered efforts to restore security in the North of Mali, and *stressing* the primary responsibility of the Government of Mali, the *Plateforme* and *Coordination* armed groups to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement in order to improve the security situation across Mali and to forestall attempts by terrorist groups to derail the implementation of the Agreement,

Noting the lack of progress in the creation and operationalization mechanisms to promote reconciliation and justice, including the Commission of Inquiry as well as the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, and *expressing* concerns that this delay risks creating a culture of impunity by allowing human rights abuses and violations to go unaddressed,

Strongly condemning the activities in Mali and in the Sahel region of terrorist organizations, including MUJAO, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al Mourabitoune, Ansar Eddine, and associated individuals and groups such as Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims) and Islamic State in Greater Sahara and Ansaroul Islam, which continue

to operate in Mali and constitute a threat to peace and security in the region and beyond, and human rights abuses and violence against civilians, notably women and children, committed in Mali and in the region by terrorist groups,

Condemning the attacks against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the Malian Defence and Security Forces, the European Union Training Mission Mali (EUTM Mali) and the French forces, that continue to be perpetrated by terrorist groups,

Stressing that terrorism can only be defeated by a sustained and comprehensive approach involving the active participation and collaboration of all States, and regional and international organizations to impede, impair, and isolate the terrorist threat, and *reaffirming* that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or civilization,

Stressing also that States must ensure that any measures taken to combat terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, refugee law, and humanitarian law,

Recalling the listing of MUJAO, the Organization of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Ansar Eddine and its leader Iyad Ag Ghali, and Al Mourabitoune on the sanctions list established by the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee and *reiterating* its readiness, under the above-mentioned regime, to sanction further individuals, groups, undertakings and entities who are associated with Al-Qaida and other listed entities and individuals, including AQIM, Al Mourabitoune and Ansar Eddine, in accordance with the established listing criteria,

Welcoming the continued action by the French forces, at the request and in support of the Malian authorities, to deter the terrorist threat in the North of Mali,

Emphasizing that security and stability in Mali are inextricably linked to that of the Sahel and West Africa regions, as well as the situation in Libya and in the North Africa region,

Acknowledging the impact of the situation in Mali on peace and security in the Sahel, as well as on the wider West Africa and North African region,

Expressing its continued concern over the transnational dimension of the terrorist threat in the Sahel region, as well as the serious challenges posed by transnational organized crime in the Sahel region, including arms and drug trafficking, the smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons, and its increasing links, in some cases, with terrorism, and *underscoring* the responsibility of the countries in the region in addressing these threats and challenges,

Recognizing the determination and ownership of the Governments of the Group of Five for the Sahel States (G5 Sahel) to address the impact of terrorism and transnational organized crime, including through the conduct of cross-border joint military counter-terrorist operations, *welcoming* the efforts of the French forces to support these operations, also *welcoming* the African Union Nouakchott process, and *further welcoming* the decision of the States of the Sahel and Sahara to establish a new counterterrorist centre with its headquarters in Cairo, Egypt,

Welcoming the deployment of the *Force Conjointe des Etats du G5 Sahel* (FC-G5S), and underlining that FC-G5S efforts to counter the activities of terrorist groups and other organized criminal groups will contribute to create a more secure environment in the Sahel region, with a view to supporting MINUSMA fulfil its mandate to stabilize Mali, and *commending* the European Union's pledge to provide support to the FC-G5S of 50 million Euros,

Strongly condemning the incidents of kidnapping and hostage-taking with the aim of raising funds or gaining political concessions, *reiterating* its determination to prevent kidnapping and hostage-taking in the Sahel region, in accordance with applicable international law, *recalling* its resolutions 2133 (2014) and 2253 (2015), including its call upon all Member States to prevent terrorists from benefiting directly or indirectly from the payment of ransoms or from political concessions and to secure the safe release of hostages and, in this regard, *noting* the publication of the Global Counterterrorism Forum's (GCTF) "Algiers Memorandum on Good Practices on Preventing and Denying the Benefits of Kidnapping for Ransom by Terrorists",

Strongly condemning all abuses and violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including those involving extrajudicial and summary executions, arbitrary arrests and detentions and ill-treatment of prisoners, sexual and gender-based violence, as well as killing, maiming, recruitment and use of children, attacks against schools and hospitals, *calling on* all parties to respect the civilian character of schools in accordance with international humanitarian law and to cease detention of all children on national security charges in violation of applicable international law, and *further calling upon* all parties to bring an end to such violations and abuses and to comply with their obligations under applicable international law,

Reiterating, in this regard, that all perpetrators of such acts must be held accountable and that some of such acts referred to in the paragraph above may amount to crimes under the Rome Statute, *taking note* that, acting upon the referral of the transitional authorities of Mali dated 13 July 2012, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) opened, on 16 January 2013, an investigation into alleged crimes committed on the territory of Mali since January 2012, and, in this regard, *further taking note* of the fact that on 27 September 2016 the ICC found Mr Al Mahdi guilty of the war crime of intentionally directing attacks against religious and historical monuments in Timbuktu, and *recalling* the importance of assistance and cooperation, by all parties concerned, with the Court,

Welcoming the signing of an action plan to end and prevent recruitment and use of children and sexual violence against children by the *Coordination armed group* and the United Nations in March 2017, and *calling for* its full and immediate implementation,

Underscoring that Malian civilian control and oversight as well as further consolidation of the Malian Defence and Security Forces are important to ensure Mali's long-term security and stability and to protect the people of Mali,

Commending the role of the EUTM Mali in Mali in providing training and advice for the Malian Defence and Security Forces, including contributing to the strengthening of civilian authority and respect for human rights, and of the European Union Capacity Building Mission (EUCAP Sahel Mali) in providing strategic advice and training for the Police, Gendarmerie and Garde nationale in Mali,

Emphasizing the need for all parties to uphold and respect the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence in order to ensure the continued provision of humanitarian assistance, the safety and protection of civilians receiving assistance and the security of humanitarian personnel operating in Mali, and *stressing* the importance of humanitarian assistance being delivered on the basis of need,

Remaining seriously concerned over the significant ongoing food and humanitarian crisis in Mali, and over the insecurity which hinders humanitarian

access, exacerbated by the presence of armed groups, terrorist and criminal networks, and their activities, the presence of landmines as well as the continued illicit proliferation of weapons from within and outside the region that threatens the peace, security, and stability of States in this region, and condemning attacks against humanitarian personnel,

Reiterating its strong support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali, and for MINUSMA to assist the Malian authorities and the Malian people in their efforts to bring lasting peace and stability to their country, bearing in mind the primary responsibility of the Malian authorities to protect the population, and *welcoming* the stabilizing effect of the international presence in Mali, including MINUSMA,

Commending troop and police contributing countries of MINUSMA for their contribution, *paying* tribute to the peacekeepers who risk, as well as lost, their lives in this respect, *strongly condemning* attacks against peacekeepers, *underlining* that these attacks may constitute war crimes under international law, *stressing* that those responsible for these acts should be held accountable, *calling on* the Government of Mali to swiftly investigate and bring the perpetrators to justice and *further stressing* the importance of MINUSMA having the necessary capacities to promote the safety and security of the United Nations peacekeepers,

Reiterating its serious concern at the continuing lack of key capabilities for MINUSMA, *stressing* the need to fill gaps in and strengthen MINUSMA's capabilities to enable it to implement its mandate in a complex security environment that includes asymmetric threats, and *emphasizing* the utmost importance of improving logistics support to ensure the security and safety of MINUSMA's personnel in that regard,

Welcoming the pledges announced at the MINUSMA extraordinary force generation conference chaired by the Secretary-General on 22 and 23 May 2017 to fill in troops and capacity gaps, *calling on* Member States who expressed pledges to deploy these units rapidly, and *calling for* the rapid deployment of the quick reaction force established by resolution 2162 (2014), as well as the aviation unit supporting it, following its withdrawal from UNOCI and its scheduled transfer to MINUSMA, pursuant to its resolution 2295 (2016),

Determining that the situation in Mali continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali

1. *Urges* the Government of Mali, the Plateforme and Coordination armed groups to continue to engage constructively with sustained political will and in good faith to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali to bring concrete peace dividends to the populations of Mali, and to urgently agree on new timelines for its implementation;

2. *Urges* the Government of Mali, the Plateforme and Coordination armed groups to prioritize without further delay the necessary steps to advance the implementation of the following provisions of the Agreement, bearing in mind the need to ensure the full implementation of the Agreement, notably:

- political and institutional aspects, as referred to in Part II of the Agreement, notably the decentralization process and the effective functioning of the interim administrations, ensuring women's participation, as well as the timely holding of district, regional, legislative and presidential elections, municipal

by-elections, as well as a constitutional referendum in 2017 and 2018 by the Malian authorities,

- defence and security aspects, as referred to in Part III and Annex 2 of the Agreement, giving priority to the deployment of joint security patrols and special units in the North of Mali and the cantonment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed combatants, within the framework of the reform of the security sector;

3. *Urges* the Government of Mali, the Plateforme and Coordination armed groups to continue to uphold the ceasefire agreement of 23 May 2014, the Arrangement sécuritaire pour une cessation des hostilités of 5 June 2015, and the declarations of cessation of hostilities of 24 July 2014 and 19 February 2015;

4. *Expresses* its readiness to consider targeted sanctions against those who take actions to obstruct or threaten the implementation of the Agreement, those who resume hostilities and violate the ceasefire, those who attack and take actions to threaten MINUSMA and other international presences, as well as those who provide support to such attacks and actions;

5. *Demands* that all armed groups in Mali put aside their arms, cease hostilities, reject the recourse to violence, cut off all ties with terrorist organizations, take concrete steps to enhance their cooperation and coordination with the Government of Mali to eliminate the terrorist threat, and recognize, without conditions, the unity and territorial integrity of the Malian State, within the framework of the Agreement;

6. *Urges* all parties in Mali to cooperate fully with the deployment and activities of MINUSMA, in particular by ensuring the safety, security and freedom of movement of MINUSMA's personnel with unhindered and immediate access throughout the territory of Mali to enable MINUSMA to carry out fully its mandate;

7. *Urges* the Government of Mali, the Plateforme and Coordination armed groups to cooperate fully and coordinate with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and MINUSMA, in particular on the implementation of the Agreement;

8. *Requests* the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali (SRSG) to use his good offices to encourage and support the full implementation of the Agreement, in particular by playing a central role to support and oversee the implementation of the Agreement by the Government of Mali, the Plateforme and Coordination armed groups, notably by heading the Secretariat of the Comité de suivi de l'Accord (CSA), and in particular, to assist the Malian parties in identifying and prioritizing implementation steps, consistent with the provisions of the Agreement, and *further requests* the SRSG to use his good offices to support the holding of the upcoming elections and the constitutional referendum;

9. *Calls on* the members of the CSA and other relevant international partners to sustain their support to the implementation of the Agreement, including through expediting the appointment of an independent observer as provided for in article 63 of the Agreement, and to coordinate their efforts with the SRSG for Mali and MINUSMA in this regard, and *recognizes* the role of the CSA to reconcile disagreements between the Malian parties;

10. *Affirms* that the gradual restoration and extension of State authority across the territory of Mali, in particular the reformed and reconstituted Malian Defence and Security Forces (MDSF), consistent with the provisions of the Agreement, would contribute significantly to the stability of Mali and to deter the terrorist threat, and *encourages* bilateral and multilateral partners to increase their

support to accelerate the redeployment of the MDSF, once reformed and reconstituted, to the north of Mali, particularly by providing relevant equipment and training, in coordination with the Government of Mali and MINUSMA and within the framework of the Agreement;

11. *Calls for* the inclusion within national and regional strategies of programmes to support community efforts to address the stigma of sexual violence and the reintegration of survivors into their communities;

12. *Calls upon* the Government of Mali to finalize its strategy for the development of the North of Mali and the national emergency plan, *welcomes* the significant contributions of partners following the International Conference for the economic recovery and development of Mali held in Paris on 22 October 2015, *encourages* the effective fulfilment of the commitments made during this conference, and *urges* the Government of Mali to disburse the funds already received;

13. *Welcomes* the adoption by the Government of Mali of a comprehensive plan to re-establish state presence in the Centre of Mali (*Plan de sécurisation intégrée des régions du centre* — PSIRC), and *calls for* the implementation of this plan while balancing efforts to restore security with actions to strengthen governance, provide public and social services to the population, initiate a dialogue to gain trust among all communities and respect the rule of law and human rights;

14. *Encourages* all relevant United Nations agencies, as well as regional, bilateral and multilateral partners to provide the necessary support to contribute to the implementation of the Agreement by the Malian parties, in particular its provisions pertaining to socioeconomic and cultural development;

MINUSMA's mandate

15. *Decides* to extend the mandate of MINUSMA until 30 June 2018;

16. *Decides* that MINUSMA shall continue to comprise up to 13,289 military personnel and 1,920 police personnel, and *requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to expedite force and asset generation, as well as deployment, including as set out in paragraph 34 below;

17. *Decides* that the strategic priority of MINUSMA remains to support the implementation by the Government, the *Plateforme* and *Coordination* armed groups, as well as by other relevant Malian stakeholders, of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, in particular its political and security aspects, notably the gradual restoration and extension of State authority;

18. *Authorizes* MINUSMA to take all necessary means to carry out its mandate, within its capabilities and its areas of deployment;

19. *Requests* MINUSMA to achieve its more proactive and robust posture to carry out its mandate;

20. *Decides* that MINUSMA's mandate shall include the following priority tasks:

(a) Support to the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali

(i) To support the implementation of the political and institutional reforms provided by the Agreement, especially in its Part II, notably to support the Government's efforts for the effective and restoration and extension of State authority and rule of law throughout the territory, including through supporting the

effective functioning of interim administrations in the North of Mali under the conditions set out in the Agreement;

(ii) To support the implementation of the defence and security measures of the Agreement, especially its Part III and Annex 2, notably:

- to support, monitor and supervise the ceasefire and to report to the Security Council on violations of it,
- to support the deployment of joint security patrols in the North of Mali, where necessary and where possible,
- to support the redeployment of the reformed and reconstituted Malian Defence and Security Forces (MDSF) in the Centre and North of Mali;
- to support the cantonment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups, including through the integration of elements of the signatory armed groups in the MDSF as an interim measure, within the framework of the reform of the security sector, taking into account the particular needs of women and children and without prejudice to the anticipated plans of the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration and integration commissions,
- to ensure coherence of international efforts, in close collaboration with other bilateral partners, donors and international organizations, including the European Union, engaged in these fields, to rebuild the Malian security sector, within the framework set out by the Agreement;

(iii) To support the implementation of the reconciliation and justice measures of the Agreement, especially in its Part V, including with respect to the establishment and operations of an international commission of inquiry, in consultation with the parties, and support the operationalization of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission;

(iv) To support, within its resources and areas of deployment, the conduct of inclusive, free, fair and transparent elections, as well as the holding of a constitutional referendum, including through the provision of appropriate technical assistance and security arrangements, consistent with the provisions of the Agreement;

(b) Good offices and reconciliation

To exercise good offices, confidence-building and facilitation at the national and local levels, in order to support dialogue with and among all stakeholders towards reconciliation and social cohesion, to support efforts to reduce intercommunal tensions, bearing in mind the primary responsibility of the Malian authorities, to support the holding of peaceful, inclusive, fair and transparent elections, and to encourage and support the full implementation of the Agreement by the Government of Mali, the Plateforme and Coordination armed groups, including by promoting the participation of civil society, including women's organizations, as well as youth organizations;

(c) Protection of civilians and stabilization, including against asymmetric threats

(i) To protect, without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the Malian authorities, civilians under threat of physical violence;

(ii) In support of the Malian authorities, to stabilize the key population centres and other areas where civilians are at risk, notably in the North and Centre of Mali, and, in this regard, to enhance early warning, to anticipate, deter and counter threats, including asymmetric threats, and to take robust and active steps to

protect civilians, including through active and effective patrolling in areas where civilians are at risk, and to prevent the return of armed elements to those areas, engaging in direct operations pursuant only to serious and credible threats;

(iii) To provide specific protection for women and children affected by armed conflict, including through Child Protection Advisors and Women Protection Advisors as well as consultations with women's organizations, and address the needs of victims of sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict;

(d) Countering asymmetric attacks in active defence of MINUSMA's mandate

In pursuit of its priorities and active defence of its mandate, to anticipate and deter threats and to take robust and active steps to counter asymmetric attacks against civilians or United Nations personnel, to ensure prompt and effective responses to threats of violence against civilians and to prevent a return of armed elements to those areas, engaging in direct operations pursuant only to serious and credible threats;

(e) Protection, safety and security of United Nations personnel

To protect the United Nations personnel, notably uniformed personnel, installations and equipment and ensure the safety, security and freedom of movement of United Nations and associated personnel, and, in this context, to periodically review all implemented safety and security measures;

(f) Promotion and protection of human rights

(i) To assist the Malian authorities in their efforts to promote and protect human rights, in particular in the areas of justice and reconciliation, including to support, as feasible and appropriate, the efforts of the Malian authorities, without prejudice to their responsibilities, to bring to justice those responsible for serious abuses or violations of human rights or violations of international humanitarian law, in particular war crimes and crimes against humanity in Mali, taking into account the referral by the transitional authorities of Mali of the situation in their country since January 2012 to the International Criminal Court;

(ii) To monitor, help investigate and report publicly and regularly to the Security Council, on violations of international humanitarian law and on violations and abuses of human rights, including all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and violations and abuses committed against women and children throughout Mali and to contribute to efforts to prevent such violations and abuses;

(g) Humanitarian assistance

In support of the Malian authorities, to contribute to the creation of a secure environment for the safe, civilian-led delivery of humanitarian assistance, in accordance with humanitarian principles, and the voluntary, safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees, or local integration or resettlement of internally displaced persons and refugees in close coordination with humanitarian actors;

21. *Underlines* that support to the Malian defence and security forces under paragraph 20 (a) (ii), in the context of support for the implementation of the defense and security measures of the Agreement, continues to include coordinated operations, operational and logistical support, mentoring and strengthened information sharing, medical evacuation, transportation and planning, within existing resources, without prejudice to the basic principles of peacekeeping;

22. *Further authorizes* MINUSMA to use its existing capacities to assist in implementing the following tasks:

(a) Projects for stabilization

In support of the Malian authorities, to contribute to the creation of a secure environment for projects, including quick impact projects, aimed at stabilizing the North of Mali;

(b) Weapons and ammunition management

To assist the Malian authorities with the removal and destruction of mines and other explosive devices and weapons and ammunition management;

(c) Support for cultural preservation

To assist the Malian authorities, as necessary and feasible, in protecting from attack the cultural and historical sites in Mali, in collaboration with UNESCO;

(d) Cooperation with the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee

To assist, within its capabilities, its areas of deployment and without prejudice to its mandate, the 1267/1989/2253 ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established by resolution 1526 (2004), including by passing information relevant to the implementation of the measures in paragraph 2 of resolution 2253 (2015);

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to align budgetary resources according to the prioritization of tasks as set out in paragraphs 20 and 22 of this resolution, and to ensure an efficient division of tasks and complementarity of efforts between MINUSMA and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), based on their mandates and comparative advantages, to support the implementation of the Agreement, as well as to continuously adjust this deployment according to the progress made in the implementation of MINUSMA's mandate, consistent with the division of tasks with the UNCT requested in paragraph 48 of this resolution, while stressing the importance of adequate resources for the United Nations Country Team and *encourages* Member States and relevant organizations to consider providing the necessary voluntary funding;

24. *Requests* MINUSMA to further enhance its interaction with the civilian population, as well as its cooperation with the Malian Defence and Security Forces, including through the development of an effective communication strategy and MINUSMA radio, in order to raise awareness and understanding about its mandate and activities;

25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to enhance cooperation and information sharing, where appropriate, between MINUSMA, UNOWAS and Member States in the region as well as regional security initiatives, notably coordination with the G5 Sahel and the African Union Nouakchott Process;

26. *Requests* MINUSMA to ensure that any support provided to non-United Nations security forces, including the MDSE, is provided in strict compliance with the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces (HRDDP);

27. *Requests* MINUSMA to take fully into account gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandate and to assist the Malian authorities in ensuring the full and effective participation, involvement and representation of

women at all levels and at an early stage of the stabilization phase, including the security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, as well as in reconciliation and electoral processes, *further requests* MINUSMA to assist the parties to ensure women's full and active participation in the implementation of the Agreement, and further requests enhanced reporting by MINUSMA to the Security Council on this issue;

28. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure full compliance of MINUSMA with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuses and to keep the Council fully informed if such cases of misconduct occur, and urges troop- and police-contributing countries to take appropriate preventative action, including pre-deployment awareness training, and to ensure full accountability in cases of such conduct involving their personnel;

29. *Requests* MINUSMA to take fully into account child protection as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandate and to assist the Malian authorities in ensuring that the protection of children's rights is taken into account, inter alia, in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes and in security sector reform in order to end and prevent violations and abuses against children;

30. *Requests* MINUSMA to improve coordination between its civil, military and police components, including through an integrated approach to operational planning and intelligence;

Capacities of MINUSMA, safety and security of MINUSMA's personnel

31. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take all necessary steps, including through the full use of existing authorities and extraordinary administrative measures, to enable MINUSMA to reach its full operational capacity without further delay;

32. *Urges* MINUSMA's troop and police contributing countries to expedite the procurement and deployment of all necessary contingent-owned equipment, *urges* Member States to provide troops and police that have adequate capabilities, pre-deployment and, where appropriate, in situ training and equipment, including enablers, specific to the operating environment, in order for MINUSMA to fulfil its mandate, and *welcomes* the assistance of Member States to MINUSMA's troop and police contributing countries in this regard;

33. *Commends* the commitment of the troop- and police-contributing countries in implementing the MINUSMA's mandate in a challenging environment, and in this connection, *takes note* of the Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed between the United Nations and the troop- and police-contributing countries, *and calls on* troop- and police-contributing countries to fully and effectively implement the provisions of these MoUs;

34. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to take all appropriate additional measures and, in consultation with troop- and police-contributing countries, to identify options, including seeking the support of Member States, to review and enhance the safety and security of MINUSMA's personnel and to enable MINUSMA to execute effectively its mandate in a complex security environment that includes asymmetric threats, including through:

- improving MINUSMA's intelligence and analysis capacities, including surveillance and monitoring capacities, within the limits of its mandate,
- providing training and equipment to counter explosive devices, including enhanced support to troop and police contributing countries to deploy the

environment specific armoured personnel carriers and other mine-protected vehicles needed under the current Force requirements,

- improving logistics in mission, including by securing MINUSMA's logistical supply routes and deploying combat convoy battalions, as needed,
- implementing more effective casualty and medical evacuation procedures, as well as deploying enhanced medical evacuation capacities,
- taking active and effective measures to improve the planning and functioning of MINUSMA's safety and security facilities and arrangements,
- securing long-term rotation schemes for critical capabilities as well as exploring innovative options to promote partnerships between equipment, troop- and police-contributing countries;

35. *Calls upon* Member States, especially those in the region, to ensure the free, unhindered and expeditious movement to and from Mali of all personnel, as well as equipment, provisions, supplies and other goods, which are for the exclusive and official use of MINUSMA, in order to facilitate the timely and cost-effective delivery of the logistical supply of MINUSMA, and in this regard, *requests* the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures to facilitate the logistical supply of MINUSMA and to consolidate supply routes, including through using alternative routes and relocating MINUSMA's logistics hubs;

36. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to keep the Mission concept under continuous review, specifically noting the deterioration of security in the Centre of Mali, in order to maximize the positive impact of MINUSMA's resources and make operational adjustments where necessary, and *requests* the Secretary-General to keep it informed on its implementation;

French forces mandate

37. *Authorizes* French forces, within the limits of their capacities and areas of deployment, to use all necessary means until the end of MINUSMA's mandate as authorized in this resolution, to intervene in support of elements of MINUSMA when under imminent and serious threat upon request of the Secretary-General, and *requests* France to report to the Council on the implementation of this mandate in Mali and to coordinate its reporting with the reporting by the Secretary-General referred to in paragraph 47 below;

Obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law

38. *Urges* the Malian authorities to further combat impunity and, in this regard, to ensure that all perpetrators of crimes involving violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including those involving sexual violence, are held accountable and brought to justice, and also *urges* the Malian authorities to continue to cooperate with the ICC, in accordance with Mali's obligations under the Rome Statute;

39. *Urges* all parties to comply with obligations under international humanitarian law to respect and protect humanitarian personnel, facilities and relief consignments, and take all required steps to allow and facilitate the full, safe, immediate and unimpeded access of humanitarian actors for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all people in need, while respecting the United Nations humanitarian guiding principles and applicable international law;

40. *Reiterates* that the Malian authorities have primary responsibility to protect civilians in Mali, *further recalls* its resolutions 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000), 1674 (2006), 1738 (2006) and 1894 (2009) on the protection of civilians in armed

conflict, its resolutions 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012), 2143 (2014) and 2225 (2015) on Children And Armed Conflict and its resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2016), 2331 (2016), on Women, Peace and Security, *calls upon* MINUSMA and all military forces in Mali to take them into account and to abide by international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, *recalls* the importance of training in this regard, and *urges* all parties to implement the conclusions on Children And Armed Conflict in Mali adopted by the Security Council working group on 7 July 2014, *calls upon* the Government of Mali to finalize and sign a joint communique with the UN on addressing sexual violence in conflict, and *further calls upon* the Plateforme armed group to implement the commitments contained in its *Communiqué sur la prévention des violences sexuelles liées au conflit au Mali* of June 2016 and upon the Coordination armed group to make similar commitments;

Environmental impact of MINUSMA's operations

41. *Requests* MINUSMA to consider the environmental impacts of its operations when fulfilling its mandated tasks and, in this context, to manage them as appropriate and in accordance with applicable and relevant General Assembly resolutions and United Nations rules and regulations, and to operate mindfully in the vicinity of cultural and historical sites;

G5 Sahel contribution

42. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure adequate coordination and exchange of information, through relevant mechanisms, between MINUSMA, the FC-G5S and the French forces, within their respective mandates, and *reiterates* in this regard its request to the Secretary-General to enhance cooperation between MINUSMA and the G5 Sahel Member States through provision of relevant intelligence and liaison officers from the G5 Sahel Member States to MINUSMA in order to increase MINUSMA's awareness of the regional security environment with a view to facilitate the implementation of its mandate;

Regional and international cooperation on the Sahel

43. *Calls upon* Member States, notably Sahel, West Africa and Maghreb States, as well as regional, bilateral and multilateral partners, to enhance their coordination, including with the G5 Sahel and the African Union Nouakchott process, to develop inclusive and effective strategies to combat in a comprehensive and integrated manner the activities of terrorist groups crossing borders and seeking safe havens in the Sahel region, notably AQIM, MUJAO, Ansar Eddine and Al Mourabitoune, and to prevent the expansion of those groups as well as to limit the proliferation of all arms and transnational organized crime and other illicit activities such as drug trafficking, smuggling of migrants and human trafficking;

44. *Calls for* the rapid and effective implementation, in consultation with Member States of the Sahel region and bilateral partners and multilateral organizations, of regional strategies encompassing security, governance, development, human rights and humanitarian issues such as the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, and *encourages* in this regard the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel to continue to support Member States of the region, including of the G5 Sahel, and regional and international organizations, to tackle the challenges to peace, security and development in the Sahel region as well as their root causes;

European Union contribution

45. *Calls on* the European Union, notably its Special Representative for the Sahel and its EUTM Mali and EUCAP Sahel Mali missions, to coordinate closely with MINUSMA and bilateral partners of Mali engaged to assist the Malian authorities in the Security Sector Reform (SSR), as provided for by the Agreement and consistent with paragraph 20 (a) (ii) above;

Small arms and light weapons

46. *Calls upon* the Malian authorities, with the assistance of MINUSMA, consistent with paragraph 14 above, and international partners, to address the issue of the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons in accordance with the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials and the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, in order to ensure the safe and effective management, storage and security of their stockpiles of small arms and light weapons and the collection and/or destruction of surplus, seized, unmarked or illicitly held weapons, and *further stresses* the importance of the full implementation of its resolutions 2017 (2011), 2117 (2013) and 2220 (2015);

Reports by the Secretary-General

47. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council every three months after the adoption of this resolution on the implementation of this resolution, focusing:

(i) on the progress in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and on MINUSMA's efforts to support it, including through the benchmarks and timelines agreed between the Government of Mali and MINUSMA in December 2016, pursuant to resolution 2295 (2016);

(ii) on progress in the implementation of the measures taken to improve MINUSMA's effectiveness to implement its mandate, as outlined in paragraphs 31 to 36 above, including measures to enhance the safety and security of MINUSMA's personnel;

(iii) on coordination and exchange of information between MINUSMA, French forces and the FC-G5S as outlined in paragraph 42 above;

48. *Further requests* the Secretary-General, seeking perspectives from all relevant parties, to develop within 180 days after the adoption of this resolution a mission-wide strategic plan that:

(i) articulates a concrete phased approach to implementation of MINUSMA's mandate;

(ii) presents a transition plan with a view to handing over relevant tasks to the UNCT based on their mandates and comparative advantages as well as a mapping of capabilities, and also with a view to a possible long-term exit strategy of the Mission on the basis of improved security and political conditions as well as the progress in the implementation of the Agreement;

49. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.



Security Council

Distr.: General
6 July 2017
English
Original: Russian

**Letter dated 28 June 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith information bulletins from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence on observance of the ceasefire regime in the Syrian Arab Republic for the period 24-28 June 2017 (see annex).

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) P. Illichev
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



Annex to the letter dated 28 June 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (24 June 2017)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported seven incidents of gunfire in the following governorates: two in Ladhikiyah, one in Hama and four in Damascus.

The Turkish representative office has reported six violations: four in Damascus governorate and two in Dar'a governorate.

Most of the incidents of small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters of the terrorist groups Nusra Front and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has not carried out any humanitarian operations.

In total, 1,386 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

Over the past 24 hours, Russian field medics have provided medical assistance to 17 people.

The United Nations and partners are continuing to provide food, medical, psychological and legal assistance to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic. Work is also continuing to restore infrastructure and provide temporary housing to all those in need.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, no ceasefire agreements have been signed with populated areas.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process remains unchanged at 1,828.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime have continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 223.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (25 June 2017)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported nine incidents of gunfire: five in Ladhqiyyah governorate and four in Damascus governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported eight violations: three in Damascus governorate and five in Dar'a governorate.

Most of the incidents of small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters of the terrorist groups Nusra Front and ISIL.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out eight humanitarian operations:

Six in Aleppo city, delivering 2.6 tons of food parcels to the local population;

One in Ladhqiyyah governorate, delivering 1.3 tons of food parcels to the local population;

One in Qunaytirah governorate, delivering 1.3 tons of food parcels to the local population.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo was 5.2 tons.

Humanitarian aid was provided to 1,628 people.

In total, 1,394 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

During humanitarian operations over the past 24 hours, Russian field medics have provided medical assistance to 201 people.

The United Nations and partners are continuing to provide food, medical, psychological and legal assistance to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic. Work is also continuing to restore infrastructure and provide temporary housing to all those in need.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, no ceasefire agreements have been signed with populated areas.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process remains unchanged at 1,828.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime have continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Idlib, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 223.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (26 June 2017)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported eight incidents of gunfire in the following governorates: one in Aleppo, six in Ladhqiyyah and one in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has reported seven violations in the following governorates: one in Homs, two in Damascus, one in Qunaytirah and three in Dar'a.

Most of the incidents of small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters of the terrorist groups Nusrah Front and ISIL.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out four humanitarian operations:

Three in Aleppo city, delivering 3.6 tons of food parcels and water to the local population;

One in Suwayda' governorate, delivering 2.2 tons of food parcels to the local population.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo was 5.8 tons.

Humanitarian aid was provided to 1,827 people.

In total, 1,398 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

During humanitarian operations over the past 24 hours, Russian field medics have provided medical assistance to 42 people.

The United Nations and partners are continuing to provide food, medical, psychological and legal assistance to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic. Work is also continuing to restore infrastructure and provide temporary housing to all those in need.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, four ceasefire agreements have been signed with Blaqsah, Kunaysah, Sindiyanah and Tarin in Homs governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 1,832.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime have continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Idlib, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 223.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (27 June 2017)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported nine incidents of gunfire: one in Ladhikiyah governorate and eight in Damascus governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported eight violations in the following governorates: one in Idlib, four in Damascus, one in Qunaytirah and two in Dar'a.

Most of the incidents of small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters of the terrorist groups Nusra Front and ISIL.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out four humanitarian operations:

Three in Aleppo city, delivering 3.6 tons of water to the local population;

One in Damascus city, delivering 0.1 tons of food parcels to the local population.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo was 3.7 tons.

Humanitarian aid was provided to 1,170 people.

In total, 1,402 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

The United Nations and partners are continuing to provide food, medical, psychological and legal assistance to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic. Work is also continuing to restore infrastructure and provide temporary housing to all those in need.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, no ceasefire agreements have been signed with populated areas.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process remains unchanged at 1,832.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime have continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Idlib, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 223.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (28 June 2017)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported eight incidents of gunfire: four in Ladhikiyah governorate and four in Damascus governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported seven violations in the following governorates: four in Damascus, one in Qunaytirah and two in Dar'a.

Most of the incidents of small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters of the terrorist groups Nusra Front and ISIL.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out six humanitarian operations in Aleppo city, delivering 2.6 tons of food parcels to the local population.

Humanitarian aid was provided to 807 people.

In total, 1,408 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

During humanitarian operations over the past 24 hours, Russian field medics have provided medical assistance to 88 people.

The United Nations and partners are continuing to provide food, medical, psychological and legal assistance to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic. Work is also continuing to restore infrastructure and provide temporary housing to all those in need.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, no ceasefire agreements have been signed with populated areas.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process remains unchanged at 1,832.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime have continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Idlib, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 223.

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
29 June 2017

Original: English

Letter dated 29 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instruction from my Government, I have the honour to transmit the views of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the third report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (S/2017/515), as follows:

1. The statement of the Islamic Republic of Iran following the adoption of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) endorsing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action has been reflected in the annex to my letter dated 20 July 2015 (S/2015/550), and the positions contained therein, inter alia in paragraphs 11 and 13, are hereby reiterated.

2. The Islamic Republic of Iran remains fully committed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as a multilaterally negotiated document that includes reciprocal commitments and requires implementation in "good faith and in a constructive atmosphere, based on mutual respect". The sustainment of the Plan is essentially dependent upon its balanced implementation by all parties concerned. This requires the political atmosphere for its successful implementation and, as asserted in paragraph 5 of the third report of the Secretary-General, "to ensure that all participants benefit from the Plan". The Iranian people have yet to fully benefit from the deal owing to the obstacles mainly created by the United States, which are partly reflected in annex I to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) (S/2016/589). The so-called "review policy" of the United States, accompanied by irresponsible rhetoric and a set of new designations and sanctions amounting to a clear violation of the commitments of that country, has further adversely affected Iran's benefiting from the deal and poses unprecedented risks to the Plan.

3. It is regrettable that the third report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) ignores the core of that resolution, namely, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. This is neither justified nor helpful. As stated in my letters dated 17 July 2016 (S/2016/626) and 18 January 2017 (S/2017/51), any report on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) without the necessary information on the implementation status of the Plan does not provide the Security Council with a complete picture. We continue to urge the Secretariat to respect its mandated scope of reporting, as clearly stated in paragraph 7 of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2016/44).



4. It is claimed, in paragraph 16 of the report, and by virtue of an open source, that Iran had "flight-tested a ballistic missile". Although "there was no consensus among Council members on how that particular launch related to resolution 2231 (2015)", the report, in paragraph 9, opts paradoxically to "call upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to avoid such ballistic missile launches". It should be highlighted that the phrase "ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons" in annex B to resolution 2231 (2015) is a distinctive phrase. The said phrase in no way limits the defensive missile programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran "designed" exclusively for conventional warheads. The Islamic Republic of Iran has never been on the path to acquiring nuclear weapons and will never be in the future. Meanwhile, paragraph 17 of the report of the Secretary-General cites a twisted reading of the text of the resolution that is not shared by all and is based on arbitrary criteria created by an exclusive export control regime formed outside the United Nations framework.

5. Paragraphs 10, 30 and 31 implicate the Secretariat's engagement in the examination of alleged arms seizures. Paragraph 10 of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2016/44) clearly notes that "the Security Council shall strive to take other actions related to ... examining and taking appropriate action on information regarding alleged actions inconsistent with the relevant restrictions, by consensus". Since there was no consensual decision of the Council, the Secretariat's activities in that regard are not mandated. Furthermore, the findings go beyond its capacity and are unsubstantiated.

6. The report is excessively based on open-source information and media outlets at the cost of its credibility. Consequently, the report is overwhelmed by irrelevant or unnecessary information, such as in paragraphs 26 to 28.

7. The report contains disinformation and sheer allegations in paragraphs 22, 23 and 32 to 34, as well as a number of irrelevant communications:

(a) Paragraph 22 refers to yet another letter from the Israeli regime, detailing false speculations regarding the name, range, performance and technical characteristics of a missile. The Israeli regime had previously sent other letters making allegations that were completely rejected by the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as relevant parties and authorities (see para. 35). Such practice is a deliberate misuse of established United Nations procedures. For the reasons described in my letter dated 9 March 2017 (S/2017/205), the inclusion of such letters in the reports of the Secretary-General would lead only to the dissemination of false allegations, undermining the quality and credibility of the report;

(b) Paragraph 32 refers to two letters that lack any merit or evidence, one of which is also outdated. The letters are unrelated to the implementation of the resolution and serve only to shift the focus of the report of the Secretary-General. Surprisingly and regrettably, my letters and responses dated 16 November 2016 (A/71/617) and 4 May 2017 (S/2017/393) with regard to those communications have not been reflected in the report.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Gholamali **Khoshroo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Security Council

Distr.: General

30 June 2017

Original: English

Plurinational State of Bolivia and Japan: draft resolution*The Security Council,*

Recalling its resolutions 1590 (2005), 2102 (2013), 2295 (2016), 2299 (2016), 2305 (2016), 2327 (2016), 2338 (2017), and 2339 (2017), which mandate United Nations mine action related activities in peacekeeping operations and special political missions,

Recalling reports of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly, which have provided guidance to the United Nations Secretariat on improvised explosive device threat and impact reduction,

Taking note of General Assembly Resolutions 71/72 and 70/80, by which Member States decided to continue to include on the agenda of the General Assembly issues related to assistance in mine action and countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices,

Recalling also all relevant treaties and conventions related to mine action, their implementation and their review processes, by the respective parties,

Expressing deep concern at the serious and lasting threat to civilians posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices long after the end of conflict,

Expressing deep concern about the number of civilians, including children, killed or maimed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, in conflict and post conflict situations,

Expressing deep concern to the serious humanitarian threat, posed to civilians by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices in affected countries, which has serious and lasting social and economic consequences for the populations of such countries, as well as of personnel participating in law enforcement, humanitarian, peacekeeping, rehabilitation and clearance programmes and operations,

Noting with grave concern that the indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices, including by terrorists, remains a major threat to the civilian population, including refugees returning to their homes, the safety of peacekeeping personnel, and the effective implementation of mission mandates,

Remaining seriously concerned over insecurity that is exacerbated by the presence of landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, which threatens the peace, security, and stability of States and hinders humanitarian access and the provision of assistance, and impedes sustainable economic development,



Recognizing that mine action enhances the mobility and safety of peacekeepers and humanitarian workers and contributes to the protection of civilians and supports stabilization and peacebuilding efforts,

Recognizing the primary role of States, as well as the supporting role of the United Nations, including the coordination role of the United Nations Mine Action Service, within the UN System, as well as other relevant organizations, in the mitigation of dangers posed to civilians by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices,

Appreciating that partnership and cooperation are central to the success of mine action, particularly between national authorities, the United Nations, regional organizations, civil society, and private sector,

Recognizing the continued progress made to survey and clear landmines, explosive remnants of war, and improvised explosive devices, to provide risk education to affected populations, and to support to victims,

Recalling the continued efforts by Member States, as well as the United Nations system, relevant institutions, and other stake holders, to provide the necessary information and technical, financial, and material assistance to locate, remove, mark, monitor, record and retain information on, clear, destroy or otherwise render ineffective minefields, mines, booby-traps, other devices including improvised explosive devices, and explosive remnants of war, in accordance with each State's respective international legal obligations, and emphasizing the need to enhance coordination and information-sharing with the relevant stake holders, on a voluntary basis,

Expressing grave concern over cases where weapons, including landmines and improvised explosive devices, are being used in any manner that violates international humanitarian law,

1. *Expresses grave concern* over the threat that landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices pose to civilians, refugees returning to their homes, as well as to peacekeepers, humanitarian personnel, civilian personnel, and law enforcement personnel, and stresses the need to undertake appropriate measures to mitigate this danger effectively;

2. *Calls* on all parties to armed conflicts to end immediately and definitively any indiscriminate use of explosive devices in violation of international humanitarian law;

3. *Urges* parties to armed conflicts to protect civilian populations, including children, from the threats posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices and, in this regard, encourages the international community to advocate and support efforts to clear these devices, to provide risk education, and to conduct risk reduction activities, as well as to provide assistance for the care, rehabilitation, and economic and social reintegration of victims and persons with disabilities;

4. *Stresses* the importance of ensuring, where appropriate, that peacekeeping operations, are equipped, informed, and trained to reduce the threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices;

5. *Calls upon* Member States to comply with their respective international obligations related to mine action;

6. *Calls upon* Member States, and relevant United Nations entities, in accordance with their mandates, as well as international actors and civil society, and relevant stake holders, in a position to do so, to provide assistance to clear

landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, upon request of States;

7. *Recognizes* in this regard, the efforts made by donors and affected States and encourages them, where appropriate, to further strengthen national capacities, to mitigate effectively the threat posed to civilians by landmines, explosive remnants of war, and improvised explosive devices;

8. *Encourages* efforts by all actors to conduct mine action activities in accordance with standards consistent with the International Mine Action Standards, including at the national level, on a voluntary basis;

9. *Recognizes* the positive contribution that mine action activities make to stabilization and peace sustainment efforts in the aftermath of conflict and encourages its inclusion, where appropriate, in relevant cease fire and peace agreements;

10. *Stresses* the importance of considering mine action during the earliest stages of planning and programming in peacekeeping operations and special political missions, where appropriate, as well as humanitarian emergency responses, taking into account relevant gender and age specific considerations, particularly in survey methodology, victim assistance, and risk education;

11. *Recognizes* the role of the United Nations, including the coordination role of the United Nations Mine Action Service within the UN system, in mitigating the dangers posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war, and improvised explosive devices, including through emergency responses and coordination of international actors and encourages their continued involvement, where appropriate, particularly to implement relevant mandates authorized by the Security Council;

12. *Encourages* States and organizations, in a position to do so, to remain actively engaged in the support of increased technical, advisory, and operational capacity in mine action, including by assisting affected States and relevant actors in the UN system;

13. *Welcomes* the continued partnership and cooperation between the regional and sub regional organizations, especially the African Union and the United Nations, to mitigate the threat to civilians from landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, including through the Joint Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security;

14. *Takes* note of the ongoing elaboration of the United Nations Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) Standards by national technical experts coordinated with the United Nations Mine Action Service, and stresses the need for intensified consultation with relevant stake holders as part of this process;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General, to provide the Security Council with information on threats posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, and measures to mitigate these threats, when reporting on peacekeeping operations, special political missions, and humanitarian responses in areas where landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, present a threat;

16. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Security Council a report on the implementation of the present resolution, when appropriate, within the next year;

17. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

**General Assembly
Security Council**

Distr.: General
7 July 2017
English
Original: Arabic

**General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 108
Measures to eliminate international terrorism**

**Security Council
Seventy-second year**

**Identical letters dated 29 June 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the
United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the
President of the Security Council**

On instructions from my Government, and further to previous letters regarding the Turkish regime's continued violations of the principles of international law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, its attacks against the sovereignty and territorial unity and integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, its open support for terrorism and its threat to regional and international peace and security, as well as the failure of the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility to put an end to the Erdogan regime's attacks and crimes and to hold it accountable, I should like to convey to you the following information:

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that the attacks by the Turkish regime and its armed forces against the sovereignty and territorial unity and integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, including the building of the so-called barrier wall are illegal acts that constitute military aggression and a flagrant violation of international law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of friendly relations and good-neighbourliness among States, notwithstanding the flimsy arguments and pretexts by which that criminal regime seeks to justify its illegal practices.

The Erdogan regime's efforts to seize and confiscate parcels of Syrian territory and to build walls on it are null and void and their outcome cannot be recognized in any way whatsoever. Those efforts will not alter the legal status of those parcels of territory and the fact that they belong to the Syrian Arab Republic, nor will they undermine or take away the legal and sovereign rights of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Syrian Arab Republic calls on the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security, to compel the Turkish regime to halt its support for terrorism and its attacks against the sovereignty, territorial unity and integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, and to hold that regime accountable.



I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 108, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Louay Falouh
Minister Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
30 June 2017

Original: English

**Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the
United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel****I. Introduction**

1. In a letter dated 29 December 2016 (S/2016/1129), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) until 31 December 2019 and requested me to submit a report every six months on the implementation of its mandate. The present report covers the period from 1 January to 30 June 2017 and provides an overview of developments and trends in West Africa and the Sahel. It also outlines the activities of UNOWAS and progress made in the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

II. Developments and trends in West Africa and the Sahel

2. The reporting period was characterized by the peaceful resolution of the post-election crisis in the Gambia; government initiatives to promote development in Cabo Verde and Ghana; and political reforms and electoral preparations in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Senegal. While some headway was made in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, the security situation in West Africa and the Sahel remained fragile. Terrorist activities and cross-border criminality, notably piracy and trafficking in drugs, arms and persons, continued to pose serious threats to the stability of the region. Despite regional efforts to counter Boko Haram, continuing violence has deepened a serious humanitarian crisis and development deficit in the Lake Chad basin. During a visit from 2 to 7 March 2017, a delegation from the Security Council took stock of the situation and raised awareness of the crisis. The visit led to the adoption of resolution 2349 (2017) on 31 March. Meanwhile, at the fifty-first ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held in Monrovia on 4 June, the President of Togo, Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, was elected Chair.

A. Political and governance trends

3. On 19 January 2017, the President of the Gambia, Adama Barrow, was sworn in at the embassy of the Gambia in Dakar, where he had temporarily relocated for security reasons following the refusal by the former President, Yahya A. J. J. Jammeh, to accept defeat in the presidential election held on 1 December 2016.



Diplomatic efforts made by the Heads of State of the member countries of ECOWAS, with the support of my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2337 (2017), resulted in the departure of the former President from the country on 21 January 2017. President Barrow returned to the Gambia on 26 January and began focusing efforts on establishing a new cabinet, supporting the preparation and conduct of legislative elections and developing a joint vision for the country, in consultation with members of the ruling coalition. In the legislative elections, held on 6 April, the United Democratic Party, a party in the ruling coalition led by the current Minister for Foreign Affairs, A. N. M. Ousainou Darboe, secured an absolute majority in the National Assembly.

4. In Cabo Verde, the Government, led by the Prime Minister, José Ulisses Correia e Silva, advanced its reform agenda focused on privatization, decentralization and investment in the tourism sector.

5. In Ghana, the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, appointed 54 ministers and deputy ministers to serve in his cabinet, increasing the total number of ministers to 110, up from 78 under the previous Administration. The Government immediately began implementing its key priorities of job creation; economic stabilization; the creation of a business-friendly environment; the revival of the country's agricultural sector; and investment in the health sector.

6. In Côte d'Ivoire, a new Government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Amadou Gon Coulibaly, was appointed on 11 January. In line with the provisions approved through a constitutional referendum in October 2016, Daniel Kablan Duncan, who had served as Prime Minister during the first term in office of the President, Alassane Ouattara, assumed the newly created post of Vice-President. Since January, the country has experienced a series of revolts and mutinies by soldiers demanding monetary compensation from the Government. These incidents underscore the challenges that remain to be addressed in the area of security sector reform.

7. In Guinea, the opposition deplored the fact that local elections were not held in February, as stipulated in the political agreement of 12 October 2016 between the Government and the opposition. A number of steps still need to be taken before local elections can be organized, including the approval by the Constitutional Court of a bill reforming the Electoral Code.

8. In Senegal, preparations are under way for parliamentary elections on 30 July. The amendment to the electoral law adopted on 3 January by the National Assembly included the addition of 15 parliamentary seats to represent the diaspora. Meanwhile, the arrest and indictment on 7 March of the Mayor of Dakar, Khalifa Sall, a possible presidential contender for the elections in 2019, on charges of fraud, triggered heated debate over the independence of the judiciary.

9. In Sierra Leone, the President, Ernest Bai Koroma, announced on 14 February that presidential and legislative elections would be held on 7 March 2018 and that a constitutional referendum would be held by September 2017.

10. In Liberia, preparations continued for the presidential election scheduled for 10 October.

11. In Togo, the Government took a number of measures in connection with the holding of the long overdue local elections and the reforms that remained pending under the comprehensive political agreement of 2006. Notably, a national committee for reflection on constitutional reform was established on 3 January to propose reforms in concert with the High Commission for Reconciliation and Strengthening of National Unity. The payment of reparations to the victims of the political violence that prevailed between 1958 and 2005, in line with the recommendations of

the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, began in March. Moreover, on 19 January, a National Council for Monitoring Decentralization was established and the High Authority for Combating Corruption and Related Offences commenced operations. However, opposition leaders denounced the measures as insufficient and reiterated their demands for the holding of local elections.

12. In Benin, the National Assembly failed to secure the majority required to consider the constitutional reforms proposed by the President, Patrice Athanase Guillaume Talon, including the imposition of a single six-year presidential term; public funding of political parties; and the prohibition of pretrial detention and police custody for incumbent presidents and cabinet members.

13. In Burkina Faso, against the backdrop of a worsening security situation, including protests by police personnel, on 20 February, the President, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, appointed Jean-Claude Bouda as Minister of Defence. One week later, the President also replaced the heads of the police and the armed forces. In addition, a new Ministry of Security was created in February and steps were taken to implement a strategic plan on the reform of the defence sector for the period 2017-2021. Following the finalization of the constitutional reform proposals by the Constitutional Committee on 10 January, regional consultations were held between 18 March and 20 April and a referendum on their adoption is expected to be held later in 2017.

14. In the Niger, the political situation continued to be marked by tensions between the ruling majority and the opposition. Local elections previously scheduled to be held in January were postponed indefinitely. The opposition candidate in the second round of the 2016 presidential election, Hama Amadou, was sentenced in absentia on 13 March to one year in prison on child smuggling charges. On 21 April, in response to a series of student strikes, some of which involved violent clashes with security forces, the Government signed an agreement with student representatives, in which it committed to reducing the backlog on scholarship grants and investing in building additional university infrastructure. In addition, in a cabinet reshuffle on 18 April, the President decided that the Minister of Employment, Labour and Social Protection would take the role of the Minister of Higher Education, and vice versa.

15. In Mauritania, on 17 March, the Senate rejected a draft law for constitutional reform, which included the abolishment of the Senate and significant changes to the Constitutional Council and the High Court of Justice, as well as a modification to the national flag. The draft law had been passed by a majority of the National Assembly one week earlier. On 20 April, the Council of Ministers adopted a decree for a referendum on the draft law, which is planned for 15 July.

16. In Nigeria, on 5 April, following a series of protests against socioeconomic hardship held in several cities, the President, Muhammadu Buhari, launched the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan, 2017-2020. The Government also continued to pursue its efforts to combat corruption. In that regard, on 19 April, the head of the National Intelligence Agency and the Secretary to the Government of the Federation were suspended in connection with the alleged misappropriation of public funds. Notwithstanding these positive developments, national debate centred on the President's long absences from the country on medical grounds.

B. Security trends

17. Instability in Mali continued to spread into north-eastern Burkina Faso and the western area of the Niger. On 2 March, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Al Mourabitoun, Ansar Eddine and Front de libération du Macina merged to form a

new alliance, the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims, which is composed of leaders of different ethnic backgrounds. The Group has already claimed responsibility for several deadly attacks against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and Malian forces and is expected to continue carrying out such attacks. In Burkina Faso, the number of terrorist attacks against military and civilian targets increased during the first quarter of the year. In the Niger, terrorist and violent extremist activity spread from the north of the country and contributed to Boko Haram militant activities in the south. On 26 April, representatives of the Liptako-Gourma Integrated Development Authority, a regional organization seeking to develop the contiguous areas of Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger, at the request of the three Heads of State, visited the Lake Chad Basin Commission in N'Djamena to discuss the establishment of a joint security force to more effectively control the borders shared by the three countries and to enhance their capacity to combat terrorism. Meanwhile, Operation Barkhane, conducted by French forces, remained under way in the region, one element of which was to provide support for forces of Mali and Burkina Faso in their efforts to search for terrorists in the Soum province of Burkina Faso. On 13 April, at its 679th meeting, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union endorsed the strategic concept of operations for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and authorized the deployment of the Joint Force, comprising some 5,000 military, police and civilian personnel, for an initial period of 12 months. It also requested the United Nations Security Council to authorize the deployment of the force.

18. In Nigeria, a surge in patrols and a scaling-up of the Niger Delta amnesty programme, as well as more vigorous outreach by the Government, under the leadership of the Vice-President, Yemi Osinbajo, led to a significant reduction in the number of violent incidents in the Niger Delta region. However, the continued detention without trial of the leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky, despite a court ordering his release in December 2016, triggered further clashes between security forces and members of the Movement. In addition, violent clashes between farmers and pastoralists in the Middle Belt and other regions continued to strain intercommunal relations. From January to April, clashes between farmers and pastoralists resulted in over 700 deaths. Violent confrontations between pastoralists and farmers were also observed in other West African countries, including Ghana and Benin.

19. The production and trafficking of drugs remained a source of instability. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Joint Airport Interdiction Task Force of the Airport Communication Project (AIRCOP), a multi-agency anti-trafficking initiative, seized over 7 kilograms of cocaine between January and March in Mali alone. In addition, there were reports of an increase in cannabis production and consumption, as well as in methamphetamine trafficking in the region. Moreover, on 10 April, the Chair of ECOWAS, the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, called on ECOWAS member States to strengthen regulatory regimes and enforce legislation against the counterfeiting of pharmaceuticals in the region.

20. Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea remained a significant challenge. A shift in piracy tactics was noted, from theft of cargo to hijackings for ransom. Of the 27 maritime crew members kidnapped for ransom worldwide between January and March, 17 were abducted off the coast of Nigeria.

C. Violence perpetrated by Boko Haram

21. Since my previous report (S/2016/1072), a slight decrease in the number of attacks carried out by Boko Haram and a larger decrease in the number of fatalities were reported in the Niger and Nigeria. In the period from 1 January to 15 April, 161 security incidents related to Boko Haram in the two countries resulted in 143 reported deaths. Despite efforts by the Multinational Joint Task Force and the countries, Boko Haram continued to perform raids on urban and rural settlements and staged heavily armed attacks against military positions in Borno State, Nigeria. On 9 February, Boko Haram insurgents ambushed newly trained army recruits along the Ajiri-Dikwa road in the Dikwa area of Borno State. The incident reportedly resulted in the deaths of seven Nigerian soldiers and more than 30 Boko Haram militants. On 15 March, approximately 300 Boko Haram fighters attacked a police station and a military base in the Magumeri area of Borno State. They were repelled by the military forces, but a number of soldiers were injured and the military base was destroyed. Attacks on military convoys also continued. Two assaults on the Maiduguri-Biu highway on 28 and 31 January, which had earlier been declared safe, underlined the tenuous nature of the gains made. The continuing use of women and children as suicide agents, including pregnant women and mothers with babies, was particularly alarming. On 20 January, three female suicide bombers, one of them carrying a baby on her back, blew themselves up, killing at least 11 people and injuring 14 others at a checkpoint in the town of Madagali, Adamawa State, Nigeria. Several abductions of women and young people were also recorded during the reporting period in Borno State. In a video released on 22 March, the leader of Boko Haram, Abubakar Shekau, reiterated calls to create an Islamic caliphate across West Africa, while the group's faction under Abu Musab al-Barnawi reportedly intensified attempts to win over local populations.

22. Although confronted with continuing logistical and financial challenges, the Multinational Joint Task Force continued to play a key role in the response to Boko Haram. In collaboration with the Force, the Cameroonian and Nigerian military reportedly rescued over 7,000 captives who were being held by Boko Haram between March and April. The ongoing offensive also led to the surrender of hundreds of Boko Haram fighters. In an unfortunate turn of events, however, on 17 January, the Nigerian military accidentally bombed an internally displaced persons camp in the town of Rann in Borno State, underscoring the need to further improve intelligence-gathering and civilian-military relations in the fight against Boko Haram. In Senegal, a suspected Boko Haram recruiter was arrested on 12 April and progress was made in setting up a rehabilitation centre for ex-militants in the Diffa region of the Niger.

23. On 6 May, following negotiations facilitated by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Government of Switzerland, Boko Haram released a further 82 of the girls who had been abducted from Chibok in April 2014, bringing the total number of girls freed to 105, of the 276 initially abducted. The Government is making efforts, with United Nations support, to help them to reintegrate into society. On 12 April, the Nigerian Department of State Services revealed that it had averted planned attacks on the embassies of the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Abuja.

D. Socioeconomic trends

24. West African economies are rebounding from a slump in export commodity prices and the concomitant economic slowdown. An economic growth rate of 4.3 per cent is forecast for West Africa in 2017 by the International Monetary Fund,

while the Central Bank of West African States projects an expansion of up to 7 per cent for members of the West African Economic and Monetary Union. According to an analysis by the World Bank, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal are ranked among the seven best-performing countries in Africa. However, owing to a decrease in world prices and a glut of stock offerings, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire announced in April a 10 per cent reduction in the purchase price for cocoa. After officially entering into recession in 2016, Nigeria is expected to resume modest growth at a rate of 0.8 per cent in 2017, reflecting an increase in oil production, strong performance in the agricultural sector and the stabilization of the national currency. An increase in oil production is also expected to drive the growth rate in Ghana to 6 per cent, which should help to counter the country's rising level of debt.

E. Humanitarian trends

25. The overall humanitarian situation in the region remains dire, marked by high levels of food insecurity, widespread displacement and susceptibility to epidemics. Extreme poverty, climate change, armed conflict and insecurity are behind the high levels of structural, chronic and acute vulnerability present in the region, which continue to require significant humanitarian and development action. Despite larger-than-average harvests in 2016 in much of the Sahel, approximately 30 million people are facing food insecurity, 12 million of whom are in need of emergency food assistance, and around 4.7 million children under the age of 5 years are severely malnourished.

26. Across the region, almost 5 million people are suffering from the consequences of forced displacement. While the number of internally displaced persons in the Lake Chad Basin has decreased slightly from 2.6 million to 2.4 million since the previous reporting period, 6.7 million people in the area are considered to be facing severe food insecurity. In the worst affected areas of Borno and Yobe States in Nigeria, more than 44,000 people are reported to face famine-like conditions. In Mali, 3.8 million people are food insecure, and the number of internally displaced persons rose by about 30 per cent between January and March, to 46,000. In addition, 143,500 Malian refugees are being hosted by Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger. Around 243,000 of the estimated 700,000 people living in the Diffa region of the Niger are internally displaced persons, refugees or nationals of the Niger who have returned from Nigeria.

27. Approximately 260,000 returnees were registered by the Nigeria Immigration Service as of April, and a significant number of internally displaced persons have also returned, including in some newly liberated areas. Owing to increased access, the number of beneficiaries of food assistance increased from 1.2 million to 2.1 million between January and March. However, in May, the Governor of Borno State indicated that it was no longer feasible to provide support for people returning to their areas of habitual residence because of ongoing military operations, and the authorities continued to intensify preparations to close some camps for internally displaced persons in Nigeria. Over 2,600 refugees were reportedly forcibly repatriated between January and March to border villages in Nigeria by the Cameroonian authorities. On 2 March, the Governments of Cameroon and Nigeria signed a tripartite agreement with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for voluntary repatriation. The Government of Mali disclosed that about 57,000 refugees had returned, mostly from Mauritania, as of April.

28. Funding shortfalls continued to limit the scope of the humanitarian response. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, \$2.6 billion is required in 2017 to provide assistance to 15 million people in eight countries in

West Africa and the Sahel. As of 18 May, only 20 per cent of that amount had been funded. Of the \$1.5 billion required for the Lake Chad Basin alone, only 17 per cent had been received by the end of April. Following the appeal launched in December 2016, donors had pledged \$672 million for the humanitarian response at a conference in Oslo in February.

F. Trends on human rights

29. Positive developments in relation to human rights were noted in a number of countries. In the Gambia, media outlets that had been closed by the previous regime were reopened. Political prisoners and persons arrested or detained illegally, without charges being brought, were released. In addition, the Government announced a series of measures to ensure compliance with human rights standards and made a commitment to establish a national human rights commission. The Government gave priority to setting up a truth and reconciliation commission, announcing that the commission would begin receiving victim testimonies by September. Moreover, the Government expressed its commitment to revise the Constitution in order to ensure the independence of the judiciary and the media, and to enhance civilian oversight of the security services. Notwithstanding the progress made, some cases were reported in January and February of supporters of the former President being arrested and detained for periods exceeding the constitutionally established maximum.

30. In Guinea, the Minister of Justice announced on 24 March that the trial of those charged in connection with the stadium massacre of September 2009 would start by the end of 2017. On 12 March, Abubakar "Toumba" Diakite, aide-de-camp of the former Head of State, Moussa Dadis Camara, was extradited from Senegal to Guinea, where he was subsequently indicted for a number of crimes, including murder, rape and torture, in connection with the incident. However, a number of high-ranking indicted officials remain in public office, fuelling scepticism about the Government's commitment to addressing widespread concerns over impunity.

31. In Burkina Faso, progress by the High Council for Reconciliation and National Unity in the implementation of its mandate remained slow. The trial of the former President, Blaise Compaoré, in his capacity as Minister of Defence, and 34 co-accused over their role in the violent repression of the popular uprising in October 2014, began on 27 April, but the case has yet to be heard on its merits. In Mauritania, difficulties with respect to the issuance of birth certificates, particularly among certain ethnic and community groups, remained a source of concern. More than 40 per cent of children under 5 years of age are improperly registered, which has resulted in a large stateless population, exacerbating the risk of marginalization, exploitation, trafficking and enslavement. Meanwhile, on 27 April, the Appeals Chamber of the Extraordinary African Chambers in Senegal upheld the life sentence of the former President of Chad, Hissène Habré, for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

32. In Guinea, the security forces were accused of excessive use of force in clashes with protesters in February, which led to the deaths of seven people. In a number of countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone, the authorities banned demonstrations by political opponents, while media outlets were closed in Togo. In response to attacks or threats by terrorist groups, some national authorities continued to subject people suspected of being extremist militants to arbitrary arrest, detention and ill-treatment and to carry out extrajudicial executions. In addition, recourse to judicial measures by victims remained limited, highlighting weaknesses in accountability under national and international legal instruments for human rights violations committed either by armed groups or by security forces.

G. Trends on gender issues

33. On 10 February, the Council of Ministers of ECOWAS adopted four key documents to advance gender mainstreaming and the inclusion of women in political, peace and security processes, notably a strategic framework and action plan on gender equality and elections, 2017-2022; an action plan on women, peace and security within the ECOWAS conflict prevention framework, 2017-2022; a regional action plan for combating obstetric fistula, 2016-2019; and a road map on the implementation of the supplementary Act for sustainable development in relation to the Agenda 2063 of the African Union. In addition, the adoption of a national action plan by Benin brings to 14 the number of West African countries that have put in place action plans on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

III. Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel

A. Good offices and special assignments by my Special Representative

34. Through his good offices missions and in collaboration with regional and international partners, my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel continued to support efforts to sustain peace in a number of countries in the region, including by promoting and supporting inclusive national political dialogues, constitutional and democratic reforms, and transparent and peaceful electoral processes.

35. In response to the post-election crisis in the Gambia, my Special Representative engaged with all relevant national, regional and international stakeholders to help to bring about a peaceful resolution to the crisis. He spearheaded the issuance of joint statements by the African Union, ECOWAS and the United Nations, accompanied Heads of State of the member countries of ECOWAS on their mediation and good offices visits to Banjul and advocated the full support of the international community for action by ECOWAS that aimed to ensure that the outcome of the election in the Gambia was respected. Guided by Security Council resolution 2337 (2017), my Special Representative played a critical role during the final negotiations led by the President of Guinea, Alpha Condé, and the President of Mauritania, Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, who were appointed by ECOWAS and supported by the African Union and the United Nations, which resulted in the decision by the former President, Yahya Jammeh, to step down.

36. Following the departure of the former President on 21 January, my Special Representative visited the Gambia five times to support the Government in its efforts to advance democratic governance, promote respect for the rule of law and human rights, reform the security sector and facilitate socioeconomic recovery. He held regular consultations with all relevant stakeholders and supported the efforts of the United Nations country team, including by helping to ensure the timely implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations inter-agency mission to the Gambia in February. With the support of UNOWAS, a joint transition team, comprising members of the former and the incumbent Governments, was established in February. The team completed the handover process in April. From 5 to 7 May, the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNOWAS organized a retreat for cabinet members, which was chaired by the President. The retreat focused on enhancing collaborative leadership skills and improving communication among cabinet members by stimulating discussion on key government priorities. In mid-May, UNOWAS deployed

a strategic communications expert to Banjul to further assist the Government in its efforts to inform the population about its priorities and achievements.

37. On 17 May, following the military mutiny in Côte d'Ivoire, which started on 8 May, my Special Representative travelled to Abidjan with the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Marcel de Souza, and the Secretary-General of the Presidency of Guinea, Naby Youssouf Kiridi Bangoura, on behalf of the African Union. During a meeting with the President, Alassane Ouattara, the delegation reiterated that the United Nations supported his efforts to promote stability. The delegation subsequently issued a joint press statement calling on national actors to address disagreements through dialogue and in conformity with the rule of law.

38. In Guinea, my Special Representative, in coordination with all relevant United Nations entities, continued to work with international partners to encourage national stakeholders to take the measures necessary to implement the political agreement of 12 October 2016. In Sierra Leone, the first post-conflict presidential election without the presence of a United Nations peace mission will be held in March 2018. In anticipation of that election, my Special Representative conducted a mission to Freetown in February, during which he consulted national stakeholders on a number of issues, including the constitutional review process and electoral preparations. He continues to support the Government's fundraising efforts for the electoral process. On 9 and 10 February, he conducted a visit to Togo for consultations with the President and the country's international partners. He reiterated the readiness of the United Nations to provide support to the country in preparation for the local elections.

39. During a meeting, held in Ouagadougou on 3 May, with the President of Burkina Faso, my Special Representative stressed the importance of pursuing the country's agenda on constitutional, judicial and security sector reform. From 9 to 11 March, my Special Representative met with key national and international stakeholders in Mauritania, including representatives of political parties and civil society, and encouraged further political dialogue. In addition, he discussed regional security challenges with the President of Mauritania, the Prime Minister and the Permanent Secretary of G-5 Sahel.

40. My Special Representative, in his capacity as the High-level Representative for Nigeria, remained actively engaged with all national stakeholders in a number of areas, including with respect to the implementation of the Government's key priorities. During his most recent visit to the country at the end of April, he held discussions with relevant national and international stakeholders on efforts to enhance conflict prevention mechanisms, including through the strengthening of the national peace architecture. In the light of transhumance-related tensions across the region, my Deputy Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel and the ECOWAS Commissioner for Trade, Customs, Free Movement and Tourism met in Praia on 25 January to analyse the situation and propose solutions. In follow-up to that meeting, UNOWAS organized a meeting in Dakar on 4 May in order to present to ECOWAS experts and representatives of the diplomatic community the preliminary findings of a UNOWAS study on pastoralism, security and sustainable livelihoods in West Africa.

B. Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission

41. Insecurity in the northern Cameroon-Nigeria border area continued to affect the work of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission. On 31 January, an unknown armed group attacked and killed four members of a United Nations technical monitoring team, which was conducting a field mission as part of efforts to

implement the mandate of the Commission. The technical monitoring team was deployed in November 2016 to supervise the construction of 163 pillars, as part of the Commission's border demarcation activities, by the end of the first week of March. Operations were suspended immediately following the attack and an investigation into the incident was launched. My Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, who is also the Chair of the Commission, met representatives of Cameroon and Nigeria who agreed upon reinforced security measures in order to facilitate a resumption of the Commission's activities. Representatives of Cameroon and Nigeria met with representatives of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security and the Commission in Geneva in April to develop a new field security protocol and agreed to resume construction work in October. Despite this setback, the technical monitoring team placed more than half of the pillars foreseen under the current contract during the reporting period. In addition, my Special Representative continued his efforts to raise funds for the replenishment of the extrabudgetary trust fund.

C. Enhancing subregional capacities to address cross-border and cross-cutting threats to peace and security

Security sector reform

42. UNOWAS continued to advise ECOWAS on the operationalization of its framework on security sector reform and governance. A joint mission of ECOWAS, the European Union and UNOWAS to the Gambia was conducted from 15 to 19 May to ensure that all stakeholders shared a common understanding of the country's security sector reform needs and to assist in developing a joint support plan. In Burkina Faso, where a United Nations sustaining peace initiative had been launched in 2016, a United Nations senior adviser on security sector reform was deployed to Ouagadougou in February. His contributions were instrumental in preparing a draft presidential decree outlining the security sector reform process. The decree is expected to be signed into law shortly. The process includes the establishment of an interministerial committee, which will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the security sector, taking into account all existing initiatives. A project supported by the Peacebuilding Fund was approved on 10 March to extend the deployment of the senior adviser for one year and to provide additional resources for the process. In Guinea, the United Nations advisory team on security sector reform continued to support the national process with a view to ensuring sustainability and national ownership of security sector reform management structures and their permanent integration into an organizational framework through the High Council of National Defence. On 29 March, 304 police staff graduated from the country's police academy, which had reopened in 2016.

Boko Haram

43. My Special Representative continued to encourage appropriate diplomatic, security and humanitarian responses to the violence perpetrated by Boko Haram. Following the identification of Nigeria as one of the four countries in the world facing a credible risk of famine, my Special Representative continued to advocate the full disbursement of the pledges made at the Oslo Humanitarian Conference for Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region in February. In follow-up to previous visits conducted in 2016, my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, together with my Special Representative for Central Africa and the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, visited countries affected by Boko Haram, namely, Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria, from 13 to 17 February. During the visit, the delegation consulted national and

international stakeholders on ways of enhancing counter-terrorism measures, strengthening coordination and supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of former militants. In addition, during his visit to Nigeria from 26 to 28 April, my Special Representative discussed security and humanitarian concerns relating to Boko Haram with relevant stakeholders. During the visit, he was informed of recent gains in the fight against Boko Haram in the Sambisa Forest. His interlocutors expressed concern about the risk of famine in the north-east of the country, as well as the continuous plight endured by the internally displaced persons in Borno State. While expressing their appreciation for the support provided by United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, the country's federal and state authorities called for the further scaling-up of distributions by the World Food Programme. Throughout the reporting period, my Special Representative maintained contacts with international actors regarding the release of the girls who had been abducted in Chibok and continued to encourage the Member States, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and ECOWAS to convene the long-planned joint summit on Boko Haram with the aim of developing a regional strategy.

44. With the support of the European Union, UNODC and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate continued to work with the Nigerian authorities to strengthen criminal justice responses to terrorism, including by facilitating effective inter-agency coordination and cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of cases. From 20 to 22 June, UNODC and the Committee brought together officials in Nigeria from a variety of government institutions to review the prosecution strategy for terrorism cases and to recommend measures to strengthen inter-agency coordination.

Strategy for cross-border security in the Mano River Union

45. Together with the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, UNOWAS participated in a workshop organized by the Peacebuilding Support Office and UNDP on 20 and 21 April in Abidjan, aimed at developing a project to enhance cooperation between the border communities of the two countries and to strengthen the capacities of the joint border security and confidence-building units. The project will be funded by the Peacebuilding Fund, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). A total of 12 joint border security units have been established within the framework of the cross-border security architecture of the Mano River Union. In addition, from 15 to 17 February, the International Organization for Migration, UNDP, UNMIL, UNOCI, UNODC and UNOWAS met in Dakar to discuss ways of enhancing cooperation among United Nations system entities in the context of the drawdown of UNOCI and UNMIL. During the meeting, the need for stronger national ownership in efforts to revitalize the Union was highlighted.

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

46. During the reporting period, ECCAS and ECOWAS made progress in operationalizing the Interregional Coordination Centre in Yaoundé. In March, the ECOWAS Commission and Côte d'Ivoire signed an agreement on the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in West Africa, which is to be based in Abidjan. My Special Representative continued to work with the ECOWAS Commission to encourage Ghana to sign an agreement to host the headquarters for Zone F, which comprises Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone. He was also instrumental in securing an agreement with Cabo Verde to host the headquarters for Zone G, covering the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Senegal. In addition, to inform the efforts of China and the United States to promote peace in Africa, my Special Representative attended a consultation meeting organized by the

Carter Center and the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., on 11 and 12 April, during which tripartite cooperation in the maritime domain was discussed.

Drug trafficking and transnational organized crime

47. From 20 April to 15 May, UNOWAS worked together with partner entities of the West Africa Coast Initiative, including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and UNODC, to conduct assessments in three of the four pilot countries of the Initiative, namely, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The partner entities noted that the Initiative, which had been designed in 2009, remained “fit for purpose” to counter transnational organized crime, trafficking in drugs and other illicit trafficking. They observed, however, that the transnational organized crime units were not yet fully operational. Despite strong political commitment, the units continue to rely on donor funding for operational activities. While funding from each country’s budget is critical for the long-term sustainability of the units, economic challenges and competing national priorities have prevented some Governments from disbursing the funds allocated. The units are currently financed through contributing officers of law enforcement agencies, the West Africa Coast Initiative and peace operations that are drawing down. Continued funding and support from the international community will be essential for maintaining the daily operations of the units.

D. Implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel

48. On 6 March, my Special Representative briefed the Peacebuilding Commission on the situation in the Sahel. He also attended the fourth meeting of Sahel Special Envoys, hosted by Luxembourg and the European Union on 14 and 15 March. Following preparatory meetings held in April by the three working groups of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel and the Regional Director’s Team of the United Nations Development Group, my Special Representative held a meeting of the Steering Committee of the integrated strategy on 5 May to discuss ways of fast-tracking the recommendations of the independent review of the integrated strategy, which had been submitted to the Council in January 2017. The Steering Committee agreed that the strategy would guide the United Nations in its engagement in the Sahel, while acknowledging the existing frameworks used by some United Nations entities in the region. In that regard, the role of the working groups of the Regional Director’s Team and the integrated strategy was acknowledged as key to ensuring programmatic coherence. On 14 June, my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support attended the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel, which was held in N’Djamena and chaired by Chad. A series of decisions were adopted at the meeting with a view to revitalizing the Platform and its support mechanisms, including through linkages between the working groups of the integrated strategy and the Platform.

49. The three working groups of the integrated strategy continued to advance programme delivery and joint activities with regional and subregional organizations. Several flagship projects were completed in March, including a UNDP project on border management and border communities in the Sahel and a project of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa on action in support of physical security and stockpile management activities to reduce the risk of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunitions in the Sahel region. The UNODC programme entitled “Strengthening the Sahel against crime and

terrorism" is ongoing and played a major role in the establishment in Burkina Faso in January of specialized judicial units to improve the legal response to transnational organized crime and terrorism. My Deputy Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel attended a meeting of the Steering Committee of the UNODC programme for the Sahel on 5 and 6 April, which demonstrated the increased coordination between the United Nations and national Governments, as well as the stronger linkages between countries in West Africa and the Maghreb. Under the resilience pillar of the integrated strategy, the initiative of the United Nations Population Fund on harnessing the demographic dividend for the future of the Sahel, in cooperation with ECOWAS and the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, served to strengthen links with G-5 Sahel. However, lack of funds has hampered the implementation of three important flagship projects under the pillar, namely, on support for resilient pastoralism, strengthening the resilience of mobile populations and vulnerable communities and accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women to increase resilience in the Sahel.

50. The reporting period was characterized by a stronger partnership between the United Nations and G-5 Sahel. On 6 February, my Deputy Special Representative attended the third ordinary Summit of the Heads of State of G-5 Sahel, held in Bamako. In follow-up to her participation, UNOWAS and MINUSMA provided technical support for the preparation of the strategic concept of operations of the Joint Force proposed at the Summit. My Deputy Special Representative and the Permanent Secretary of G-5 Sahel led the review, in Nouakchott on 6 and 7 March, of the road map for cooperation between the United Nations and G-5 Sahel, which endorsed a new methodology for developing joint projects and fundraising.

51. Through its liaison cell in Nouakchott, UNOWAS engaged in a series of meetings with bilateral and multilateral partners, including the African Union and the European Union, in order to enhance synergies in support of G-5 Sahel. In response to Security Council resolution 2295 (2016), UNOWAS also stepped up collaboration with MINUSMA and facilitated the Mission's contribution to the review of the road map. The cell also collaborated with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to enhance the integration of human rights considerations into the work of G-5 Sahel, and with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to facilitate the deployment of a gender adviser within the permanent secretariat of G-5 Sahel.

52. UNOWAS supported G-5 Sahel initiatives on countering violent extremism, while ensuring a concerted approach by regional United Nations actors in the operationalization of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism of 2016. On 8 and 9 March, UNOWAS and the Permanent Secretariat of G-5 Sahel organized a meeting of national experts of the Group's cell for the prevention of radicalization. The meeting examined standard operating procedures and developed work plans for 2017-2018, including community and media sensitization activities and outreach to religious bodies. UNOWAS provided assistance for the establishment of the Sahelian Threat Analysis and Early Warning Centre, which commenced operations in Nouakchott in June. From 17 to 19 May, UNOWAS also contributed to the third African Union regional workshop for the prevention of violent extremism and radicalization, held in Nouakchott, in cooperation with G-5 Sahel and the African Union. On 31 May and 1 June, my Special Representative participated in the Second Regional Conversation for the Prevention of Violent Extremism on the theme "Investing in peace and the prevention of violence in the Sahel-Sahara", organized by the International Peace Institute and the Government of Switzerland.

E. Promotion of good governance, respect for the rule of law, human rights and gender mainstreaming

53. From 8 to 12 May, UNOWAS participated in the sixtieth ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. It was preceded by a forum of non-governmental organizations, during which UNOWAS co-chaired a panel on impunity, justice and human rights in the context of violent extremism in West Africa and the Sahel. On the margins of the session, UNOWAS also organized two dialogue sessions on issues relating to human rights, governance and the rule of law, during which participants called for greater transparency with respect to civilian casualties of counter-terrorism operations, particularly in the Lake Chad Basin. In support of the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Question of Impunity, the International Organization of La Francophonie, OHCHR, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNOWAS organized, from 28 to 30 March, a training workshop for 26 trainers from the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection of Mali, as well as media professionals, which resulted in the adoption of a plan of action on maintaining order and respect for freedom of expression.

54. During the reporting period, UNOWAS efforts to promote the role of women and youth in conflict prevention focused on creating synergies among regional organizations and raising awareness on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women, youth, peace and security. Representatives of UNOWAS participated in a meeting of ministers of gender and women's affairs from member countries of ECOWAS in early February, attended a joint planning session with ECOWAS and United Nations entities on 4 May and addressed the ECOWAS West African Network of Young Female Leaders in a regional forum, which was held from 10 to 14 June. In cooperation with G-5 Sahel, UNOWAS discussed issues relating to gender, radicalization and extremism in a workshop held in Nouakchott on 18 and 19 January and contributed to a high-level dialogue held in Bamako on 21 and 22 February aimed at promoting women's leadership in the prevention of violent extremism. Shortly before the dialogue, UNOWAS took part in a meeting establishing the G-5 Sahel Women's Platform, which adopted an implementation road map. As part of its role as the secretariat of the Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel, UNOWAS hosted the Group's annual planning meeting in Dakar on 26 January and facilitated three thematic exchange sessions in March and April.

55. From 28 to 31 March, UNOWAS facilitated a mission of the Working Group on Women, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel to the Gambia. The Working Group met local women and youth organizations, as well as national authorities, including the President of the Gambia, to explore ways of enhancing the contribution of women and youth to the Government's agenda for peace and development. On 30 March, my Special Representative met the new Director of the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre to discuss the support provided by UNOWAS for the implementation of gender-related United Nations resolutions in West Africa.

56. On 9 May, my Special Representative attended a ministerial meeting in Banjul, organized by ECOWAS and UNHCR, on the eradication of statelessness in West Africa. In his keynote remarks, he stressed the need for a regional response on the issue. During the meeting, representatives of the member States of ECOWAS validated an action plan for the eradication of statelessness by 2024, which includes specific measures to identify, prevent, reduce and raise awareness on statelessness. The plan of action will be submitted to the ECOWAS Council of Ministers and the

ECOWAS Summit of Heads of State and Government for adoption as a legally binding instrument.

IV. Observations and recommendations

57. During the reporting period, there were several positive developments in the overall situation in West Africa and the Sahel. I was particularly encouraged by the peaceful transition of power in the Gambia, which demonstrated the democratic maturity of its people and showcased the effective collaboration between the United Nations, regional organizations and other international stakeholders. I encourage the political leaders of the Gambia to continue to promote national reconciliation and to lay the foundation for accountable governance and sustainable growth. I also call on international partners to support the Gambia at this critical juncture.

58. I commend the authorities of Burkina Faso on the progress achieved, with United Nations support, in reforming and reorganizing the security sector and in promoting national reconciliation. I call on institutional partners and donors to ensure close coordination with the country and support for its efforts to sustain peace and consolidate stability and democratic gains.

59. I welcome the return to calm in Côte d'Ivoire following the instability created by military elements in May and commend the Government on the measures taken to restore order. I reiterate the commitment of the United Nations to supporting the Government's efforts to sustain the hard-won gains of peace and stability. Following the closure of UNOCI on 30 June, UNOWAS will continue to follow developments in the country within the context of its regional mandate. As the United Nations peacekeeping footprint in West Africa becomes lighter, with the end of the UNMIL mandate foreseen in March 2018, the role of UNOWAS in helping to preserve the achievements made in peace consolidation in post-conflict countries will become increasingly important.

60. I am encouraged by the progress being made by some countries of the region in the fight against corruption, which continues to compromise good governance, delegitimize State authority and undermine the fight against violent extremism. I commend the Government of Nigeria, in particular, on the gains made in this area. I also congratulate the outreach efforts made by the Nigerian authorities in the Niger Delta, which have resulted in reduced violence in the area.

61. I welcome the efforts that are being made to carry out political and constitutional reforms in several countries in the region, as well as the steps being taken to strengthen human rights protection, and I urge national stakeholders to continue to engage in dialogue in a spirit of tolerance and inclusivity. In this regard, I call upon national stakeholders to work together to facilitate the holding of local elections, where they are due. I also urge them to work towards increasing the number of women appointed to senior government positions in accordance with national and regional commitments.

62. I remain worried by the prevalence of terrorist and violent extremist threats in the region and the linkages with transnational organized crime. In this regard, I welcome the leadership demonstrated by countries in West Africa and the Sahel to tackle security challenges in the region. I support the establishment of the Joint Force of G-5 Sahel and the imminent deployment of its 5,000 personnel. I also commend the efforts of the countries participating in the Multinational Joint Task Force, which have reduced the operational capacities and geographical reach of Boko Haram. I note with concern the continuing attacks on military and civilian targets, which are hampering resettlement and rehabilitation efforts and providing a

breeding ground for extremism. I encourage stronger partnership among the affected countries, as well as with regional organizations, including the African Union, and reiterate my call for all counter-insurgency efforts to be carried out in full compliance with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. I wholeheartedly welcome the release of the 82 Chibok girls and encourage continuous efforts towards the release of more Boko Haram abductees.

63. While I welcome the humanitarian assistance already provided by regional and international partners to the countries affected by Boko Haram, I remain very concerned about food insecurity in the region. I urge donors to support the humanitarian response in the Lake Chad Basin, which remains critically underfunded, and to quickly disburse the funds pledged at the Oslo Humanitarian Conference for Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region in February. I also urge the international community to support efforts to address the root causes of the Boko Haram crisis. I welcome the visit by a delegation from the Security Council to the Lake Chad region, which drew attention to this neglected crisis.

64. I commend the close cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS, G-5 Sahel, the European Union and other partners in support of stability in the Sahel region and reiterate the dedication of the United Nations to ensuring the effective implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. I commend the donor community for its generous support for the region and encourage Governments in the region and development partners to explore innovative ways to use these resources to achieve a greater development impact. I also call on all stakeholders to take the steps required to create the security and political conditions necessary for the implementation of development assistance in the Sahel region.

65. I condemn the tragic attack on the technical monitoring team of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission on 31 January, which resulted in the deaths of four personnel, and look forward to the completion of the investigation into the incident by the relevant authorities. I welcome the expeditious measures undertaken to enhance security and resume the border demarcation activities in order to give effect to the judgment of the International Court of Justice of 10 October 2002.

66. I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Governments of West Africa and the Sahel region, the African Union, ECOWAS, G-5 Sahel, the Mano River Union, the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the Lake Chad Basin Commission for their continued cooperation with UNOWAS. I also extend my appreciation to the United Nations system in West Africa and the Sahel, civil society organizations and other institutions for their close partnership with UNOWAS in the implementation of its mandate. I would like to express particular appreciation to my Special Representative, as well as the staff of UNOWAS and the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission for their continuing efforts to advance peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel.

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
30 June 2017

Original: English

Letter dated 29 June 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the forty-fifth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The present letter covers the period from 23 May to 22 June 2017.

I take note that, with the destruction of the remaining aircraft hangar on 6 June 2017, in the presence of an OPCW team, OPCW has now verified the destruction of 25 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. OPCW remains unable to verify the condition of two above-ground stationary facilities, once again due to the prevailing security situation.

I further take note that the date of the high-level consultations between OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic for resolving outstanding issues related to the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic remains under consideration. While the documents submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic provide a number of details on some of the outstanding issues, I regret that in the majority of cases that information fails to clarify any of those issues. I reiterate my strong encouragement for timely cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic and OPCW so that those issues may be resolved as soon as possible. In that regard, I welcome the fact that planning for a second inspection at the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre is under way.

The OPCW fact-finding mission in Syria is continuing its work to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons on 4 April 2017 in Khan Shaykhun, where the biomedical, biological-environmental and environmental samples collected by the fact-finding mission have indicated exposure to sarin or a sarin-like substance. I welcome the deployment of an advance team to Damascus to gather further information in that regard, and I note the ongoing preparatory work of the fact-finding mission for a possible visit to the alleged site. However, the Director-General also makes reference to new developments that will be reflected in the forthcoming fact-finding mission report and states that he has therefore decided not to deploy the fact-finding mission to Khan Shaykhun. I look forward to receiving the report of the fact-finding mission when it is available and reiterate my condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by any party, under any circumstances. Accountability for their use must follow from the identification of those responsible.



The OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism recently submitted its sixth report. I am confident that the Mechanism will continue to implement its mandate in an independent, impartial and objective manner.

I take note that, on 15 June 2017, the Joint Investigative Mechanism addressed a request for information to the Syrian Arab Republic and to relevant Member States. That information request was related to the Um-Housh incident on 16 September 2016, where the OPCW fact-finding mission determined that the victims reported to have been involved in the incident had been exposed to sulfur mustard. In that regard, I emphasize the need to support the Mechanism in accessing quality information needed for the investigation. The Mechanism is also continuing to collect information related to the Khan Shaykhun incident of 4 April 2017, while awaiting a report from the OPCW fact-finding mission.

The work of the Joint Investigative Mechanism to identify those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic is of critical importance. I again call upon all States to support both the OPCW fact-finding mission and the Mechanism.

As previously determined by the Security Council, the use of chemical weapons anywhere constitutes a threat to international peace and security and remains a serious violation of international law. I hope that the Council will now demonstrate the necessary unity and utilize all means at its disposal to ensure that those who have used chemical weapons are held accountable, in order to deter and put an end to those inhumane acts. There can be no impunity for such abhorrent attacks.

(Signed) António Guterres

Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English,
French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 May to 22 June 2017 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(Signed) Ahmet Üzümcü

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English,
French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

Background

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.
2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".
3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.
4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".
5. This, the forty-fifth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 23 May 2017 to 22 June 2017.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) As the destruction of the remaining aircraft hangar was completed on 6 June 2017 in the presence of OPCW inspectors, the Secretariat has now verified the destruction of 25 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. The condition of the two stationary above ground facilities remains to be verified.

(b) On 16 June 2017, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its forty-third monthly report (EC-85/P/NAT.4, dated 19 June 2017) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As reported previously, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

8. Further to what has been reported on previous occasions with regard to the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration, the Secretariat continued its review of the documents submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic on 18 May 2017, in accordance with Council decision EC-81/DEC.4 and paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5. While the newly submitted documents provide a number of details on some of the outstanding issues, in the majority of cases this information fails to clarify, beyond doubt, any of these issues. In a note verbale dated 1 June 2017, the Secretariat reiterated its request to the Syrian Arab Republic to renew efforts and identify documents and other relevant information that would better assist in clarifying outstanding issues. The precise date of the high-level consultations between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Secretariat, as well as a date for interviews with certain individuals involved in decision-making roles within the Syrian chemical weapons programme, remains under consideration.

9. In accordance with paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the first inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) took place from 26 February to 5 March 2017. A report on these inspections was issued by the Director-General on 2 June 2017 (EC-85/DG.16). As mentioned in this report, the Secretariat has commenced planning for the second inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah SSRC facilities, to be conducted in the second half of 2017.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

10. An amendment to the tripartite agreement between the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the OPCW, and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, and an amendment to the contribution agreement between the OPCW and UNOPS have been now signed and have entered into force. These amendments will extend until the end of December 2017 the support provided by UNOPS to the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, and ensure that the necessary administrative and logistical support is provided to the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM).

11. As requested by the Council at its Seventy Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

12. As at the cut-off date of this report, seven OPCW staff members were deployed as part of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

13. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT). As at the cut-off date of this report, contribution agreements totalling EUR 9.7 million had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

14. During the period under review, the FFM continued its work regarding the allegations of use of chemical weapons on 4 April 2017 in the Khan Shaykhun area of southern Idlib in the Syrian Arab Republic, which reportedly resulted in the deaths of over 80 people, including children, and injuries to hundreds of others. As reported previously, a Note entitled "Status Update of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria Regarding a Reported Incident in Khan Shaykhun, 4 April 2017" (S/1497/2017, dated 12 May 2017) was issued by the Secretariat to summarise the activities conducted by the FFM until 12 May 2017.

15. The FFM has continued its preparatory work with the support of a representative from the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy to Syria regarding a possible visit to the alleged site of the incident at Khan Shaykhun. In this regard, an advance team of the FFM was deployed to Damascus from 8 to 10 June 2017, which was also tasked with gathering further information on the alleged incident. However, in view of new developments that will be reflected in the FFM report to be issued soon, the Director-General has decided not to deploy the FFM to Khan Shaykhun.

16. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM has continued to study all available information relating to the allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Conclusion

17. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM and on the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues, as well as on the confirmation of the status of the two stationary above-ground facilities, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.

**Security Council**

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**Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations
Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic
Republic of the Congo****I. Introduction**

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 52 of Security Council resolution 2348 (2017). It covers major developments that have occurred in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since my report of 10 March 2017 (S/2017/206). The report describes progress in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and provides an overview of political developments since my report on the implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016 in that country (S/2017/435) of 17 May.

II. Major developments**A. Political situation**

2. During the reporting period, the implementation of the political agreement of 31 December 2016 was slow, incomplete and marked persistently by disagreements between the Rassemblement des forces politiques et sociales de la République démocratique du Congo acquises au changement, an opposition platform, and the Majorité présidentielle over whether developments were in line with the letter and spirit of the agreement.

3. On 16 May 2017, five months after the signing of the agreement and five weeks after the appointment of a new Prime Minister, a 59-member transitional Government was sworn in before the National Assembly. This followed the signing, in late April, of the Arrangements particuliers for the implementation of the agreement by most political actors, with the exception of the Rassemblement. In his address at the swearing-in ceremony, the Prime Minister, Bruno Tshibala, stated that his Government would focus on organizing credible, free, transparent and peaceful elections by the end of the year, as envisaged under the Agreement; addressing the economic crisis; improving socioeconomic conditions; and restoring peace across the country. He also announced that his Government would consider options for reducing the cost of elections, possibly by modifying voting modalities.

4. The Rassemblement denounced the formation and inauguration of the new Government as constituting an infringement of the agreement. The Secretary-



General of the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social (UDPS), Jean-Marc Kabund-a-Kabund, and the President of the Rassemblement, Félix Tshisekedi, who have long insisted that the agreement stipulates that the new Prime Minister should have been a member of the Rassemblement, called upon all Congolese to remain mobilized in support of the full implementation of the accord.

5. On 20 May, at an extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Joseph Kabila, noting that the swift organization of elections is the first objective of the Government, instructed the new cabinet to provide support to the Independent National Electoral Commission. He stressed the need to consolidate peace and security throughout the country as a prerequisite for credible elections. Mr. Kabila also urged the Government to work towards improving the socioeconomic conditions of the Congolese people, and to act swiftly in regard to presenting a draft 2017 budget for adoption by the parliament.

6. By mid-June, the conseil national de suivi de l'accord, an oversight mechanism for the implementation of the agreement, had yet to be established. No significant progress was noted in the implementation of the confidence-building measures foreseen in the agreement. Meanwhile, plans to repatriate and bury the remains of Étienne Tshisekedi, the former leader of UDPS who had passed away on 1 February, remained at an impasse, as disagreement persisted between the party and the Government on various modalities, fuelling tense stand-offs between security services and supporters of UDPS at the headquarters of the party in Kinshasa during the month of April.

7. On 30 April, the voter registration process was completed in 13 provinces and launched in 10 others; and on 28 May, the process was launched in Kinshasa. In the two remaining provinces, Kasai and Kasai Central, registration has not yet commenced owing to insecurity. Registration of the members of the Congolese diaspora has also not yet commenced. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission, as of 21 June, over 28 million potential voters had been registered, representing 69.3 per cent of the estimated electorate nationwide, in which the proportion of women is 48 per cent.

8. While the Independent National Electoral Commission maintains 31 July as the official deadline for the completion of the voter registration process, a measure of uncertainty persists, including as a result of the insecurity in Kasai and Kasai Central provinces. Also, the Government faces an increasingly difficult budgetary situation. This affects its ability to fund the electoral process, which the Commission estimates would cost \$1.3 billion. The multi-partner basket support fund for the *Projet d'appui au cycle électoral au Congo*, which is managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), remains funded at the level of only 6 per cent of the required amount of \$123.3 million, owing partly to donor concerns regarding uncertainties surrounding the political transition.

Regional and other developments

9. At the regional level, from 19 to 21 April, the ministerial-level troika of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania, Augustine Mahiga, conducted a series of consultations in Kinshasa with Mr. Kabila, members of the Government, representatives of the Episcopal Conference of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, political and civil society stakeholders, and officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission. The troika affirmed its continuing commitment to working with the United Nations, the African Union, the International Organization

of la Francophonie and other partners in the search for sustainable solutions to the current political crisis, including with respect to its security-related ramifications.

10. On 12 May, the Government of Angola called upon all Congolese actors to "immediately cease violence, acts of extremism and political intolerance", citing the continued influx of Congolese refugees from the Kasai provinces into the northern provinces of Angola. That country's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Manuel Domingos Augusto, met with Mr. Kabila in Kinshasa on 15 April. That visit was followed by the visit to Luanda on 19 May of the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Léonard She Okitundu, to discuss, with his Angolan counterparts, options for addressing the presence of Congolese refugees and other bilateral issues.

11. From 28 to 31 May, a delegation of the guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, representing the United Nations, the African Union, SADC and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where they exchanged views with Mr. Kabila and leaders of the Majorité présidentielle as well as members of various opposition parties, including Félix Tshisekedi, President of the Rassemblement, in an attempt to narrow differences and catalyse progress on the implementation of the agreement.

12. On 29 May, the European Council adopted restrictive measures directed against nine individuals who hold positions of responsibility, mostly in the State administration and in the security forces, for contributing to serious human rights violations and for undermining a consensual and peaceful solution to issues associated with the holding of elections. Those measures include a ban on entering the European Union and an asset freeze. On 1 June, the United States Department of the Treasury sanctioned the head of the Maison militaire under Mr. Kabila for his alleged role in activities that threaten the peace, security and stability.

13. During the reporting period, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued its diplomatic efforts to broaden support across the region, which resulted in emission of generally positive signals from countries of the region vis-à-vis steps taken by Mr. Kabila. These efforts included State visits to Egypt and Gabon of Mr. Kabila, as well as visits and engagement of the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration with the Presidents of Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. The Vice-Prime Minister also met in Addis Ababa with the Chair of the African Union Commission, who urged the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to take concrete steps towards the implementation of the 31 December 2016 agreement.

14. My Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Maman Sambo Sidikou, has continued to work closely with national stakeholders, regional actors (in conjunction with my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region), Saïd Djinnit, and other key international partners in support of the implementation of the agreement. He also continued to engage with political stakeholders, notably the Majorité présidentielle and the Rassemblement, on, inter alia, the important goal of organizing elections by December 2017. He advocated with national authorities for the prompt implementation of confidence-building measures aimed at creating an environment conducive to peaceful, free, fair and credible elections. Similar political engagement efforts were also carried out at the provincial level.

B. Security situation

15. The major shift observed over the first three months of 2017 across the security landscape of the country persisted during the reporting period, as violence and threats to civilians continued to spread in the west, and instability continued to prevail in the east. In the western Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in the three Kasai provinces, in addition to clashes between the Kamuina Nsapu militia and security forces — which resulted in numerous human rights violations, including targeted killings by the militia as well as summary executions and acts of rape perpetrated by security forces, as described in paragraphs 39-45 and 49 below, there was an increase in violence among ethnic communities. Foreign and Congolese armed groups remained active in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, mostly in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri. Insecurity also persisted in the border areas, specifically along the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with Angola, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. At the same time, MONUSCO has further intensified civilian, military and police efforts to deliver on the mandates of protection of civilians and the neutralization of armed groups. In situations where community alert networks were active, over 85 per cent of protection-of-civilians alerts were responded to by either the Government and/or MONUSCO.

Western Democratic Republic of the Congo

16. In Kasai Central, despite a relative improvement of the security situation in Kananga, the provincial capital, and its surrounding areas, violence persisted across the province and spread into neighbouring Kasai province and towards the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola. In both provinces, attacks by Kamuina Nsapu militia groups continued, targeting security forces, public institutions, voter registration centres, religious institutions, community leaders and civilians. Authorities reported that on 24 March, the Kamuina Nsapu militia ambushed a truck belonging to the Police Nationale Congolaise (PNC) and beheaded 39 police officers in Kamuesha, Kasai province. Between 8 and 15 April, the militia reportedly killed at least 13 customary chiefs in Kamoni territory for refusing to align with the militia; and between 5 and 10 May, killed four more customary chiefs in Kazumba, Luiza, Kasai Central and Kamonia territory. On 8 June, the militia reportedly killed five civilians who were travelling from Kalala Diboko to Masuika and whose aim was to encourage militia members to demobilize. Also, from 25 to 28 April, in Kazumba territory, the Kamuina Nsapu militia clashed with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC)), which reportedly led to the killing of 41 militia members and 12 soldiers. In the same territory, on 30 April, the attack of the Kamuina Nsapu militia on a truck delivering educational examination materials resulted in the killing of three school inspectors.

17. The ongoing violence has exacerbated intercommunal tensions and divisions. Between 13 and 25 April, in Kamonia territory, Kasai province, violence between Pende and Tshokwe communities, reportedly aligned with the Government, and Luba and Lulua communities, reportedly associated with the Kamuina Nsapu militia, led to the killing of 38 people, including eight women and eight children. Sporadic incidences of violence have also been reported in four neighbouring provinces, namely, Kasai Oriental, Sankuru, Lomami and Lualaba.

18. In response to the escalating situation, the Government restructured its military presence in the Kasai region. This led to substantial reinforcements of the armed forces with troops formally based in North Kivu, which arrived in Kananga on 27 March and had been deployed throughout Kasai province by 11 April.

Additional FARDC reinforcements from Kinshasa arrived in Kananga on 3 May. Subsequently, MONUSCO received reports of the killing of militia members and civilians during operations by the security forces. Between 28 and 30 March, for example, during operations in the Katoka and Nganza communes of Kananga, 53 civilians and members of the Kamuina Nsapu militia were reportedly killed, including at least 15 women and 14 children. On 15 May, the armed forces announced that since the end of March, 390 militia members and 124 members of the national security forces had been killed during operations in Kasai and Kasai Central provinces.

19. On 12 March, Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp, two members of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the four Congolese nationals who accompanied them went missing in Kasai Central province. On 27 March, after a 15-day intensive search-and-rescue operation conducted by MONUSCO, the remains of those two members of the Group of Experts were found in a shallow grave near Bukonde, south of Kananga, the provincial capital. A video of their murder was circulated on social media, allegedly by members of the Kamuina Nsapu militia. On 20 May, at a press conference, authorities stated that the investigation into the killing of the two members of the Group of Experts had been closed and the judicial file transmitted to the military garrison tribunal of Kananga. On 5 June, the trial of 2 of the 16 suspects in the killing began in Kananga. The 14 others, who reportedly remain at large, are being tried in absentia.

20. In Tanganyika province, violence persisted among communities and between armed groups and security forces despite a lull following a peace forum held in Kalemie, the provincial capital, in February. In March and April, nine clashes were reported between Luba and Twa militias, causing population displacements. From 27 to 29 April, Luba and Twa militias in Kalemie territory clashed following allegations that some Twa had conducted raids on crops and cattle of the Luba community. Four people were killed and hundreds of homes were burned near the village of Tabac. Violence erupted in the Bendera area, northern Kalemie territory, between Bafuliro, Banyamulenge and Twa cattle herders. In late March, a woman from the Bafuliro community was allegedly killed by Twa militiamen. This incident sparked retaliatory actions by members of the Bafuliro and Banyamulenge communities, who reportedly killed five Twa civilians, including a local chief. Clashes also took place between militias and national security forces. On 21 April, militia associated with the Twa community ambushed FARDC forces near Kalemie, taking six weapons. On the same day, Twa militias targeted a FARDC position in the village of Katak, Kalemie territory. In response, authorities arrested four Twa leaders and FARDC reinforced its presence along the Kalemie-Bendera and Kalemie-Nyunzu axes.

21. The security situation in Haut Katanga and Lualaba provinces has to a large extent been calm during the reporting period, despite sporadic incursions of Kamuina Nsapu militia from the south-eastern area of Kasai Central province into Kapanga territory, northern Lualaba province, particularly in March and early April. The incursions triggered ethnic tensions in Lualaba, notably between the local Rund community and those perceived as not being indigenous, including internally displaced persons from the greater Kasai region. Security-related incidents have decreased in the Mitwaba area, Haut Katanga province, since the surrender in October 2016 of Gédéon Kyungu Mutanga, the leader of the Mayi-Mayi Kata Katanga armed group.

22. In respect of a response by MONUSCO to the deteriorating situation across the Kasai region during the reporting period, while there has been neither involvement in, nor the provision of support to, operations conducted by FARDC, the Mission did significantly reinforce the presence of its civilian components

across the three Kasai provinces in order to protect civilians and monitor and report on human rights violations, as well as support the implementation of the agreement, the voter registration process and humanitarian access. In May, MONUSCO deployed 240 troops in three standing combat deployments in Bulungu, Luiza, and Tshimbulu, Kasai Central. Across the Kasai provinces, the Force is adjusting its posture and will deploy additional companies in the months ahead to provide assistance to the Mission's civilian components and humanitarian actors. MONUSCO has also expanded community alert networks for these areas and improved early warning mechanisms.

23. The deployment of the standing combat deployment in Tshimbulu has contributed to the return of people displaced as a result of the insecurity of the situation. Over 65 per cent of the population has now returned and all 36 schools and churches have reopened. The Mission has also supported mediation efforts with a view to protecting civilians. On 10 and 11 May, the Mission supported a capacity-building exercise for representatives of the Direction générale des affaires coutumières, a consultative committee newly established to address customary conflicts. Last, MONUSCO evacuated 26 religious figures and 80 children who had been threatened by militias and increased the number of security patrols in areas under threat.

24. The Mission upgraded its antenna in Kananga into a field office, and reinforced its office in Mbuji Mayi, with the deployment of 70 civilian staff and 30 police officers; and it now has one full company in Kananga and three standing combat deployments in Kasai Central. By the Mission's assessment, these deployments need to be maintained and possibly expanded, since they appear to have an important stabilizing effect, including by containing human rights violations and encouraging the local population to return and schools to open. MONUSCO plans to open an office in Tshikapa, the provincial capital of Kasai province, with an appropriate military deployment to assist in protecting civilians and support local authorities in addressing the growing intercommunal violence.

25. MONUSCO continued to monitor threats against the civilian population in Kinshasa. Between 9 and 11 April, during a period of heightened political tension following the nomination of the new Prime Minister, the Mission enhanced its patrolling of the city. The heightened presence of MONUSCO in the city and its continuing advocacy contributed to the release of 42 civilians arbitrarily arrested by the national police in connection with a march on 10 April planned by the Rassemblement.

Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo

26. In North Kivu, the year-old split within the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) continues to contribute to a deterioration of the security environment. On 26 April, fighting between the Conseil national pour le renouveau et la démocratie (CNRD), a splinter faction of FDLR, and Mayi-Mayi Nyatura elements, supported by another faction of the same FDLR known as FDLR/Forces combattantes abacunguzi (FDLR-FOCA), in Kivuye and Bweru villages, resulted in the death of 29 people. Clashes between ethnically based militias also continued, including in Rutshuru territory between Hutu and Nande militias, and between Mayi-Mayi Nyatura and FDLR coalitions against Mayi-Mayi Mazembe, leading to displacements of population. On 12 and 13 April, an attack by the Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS), supported by Mayi-Mayi Kifuafula elements, against Forces de défense congolaise (FDC) positions in Ngulu and Lutanda villages resulted in the burning of several houses and the displacement of civilians. The situation around Lake Edward remained volatile as various Mayi-Mayi groups attempted to exert control over the lucrative fishing trade. During the

period from 22 April to 1 May, 50 fishermen were abducted by Mayi Mayi Charles elements. In Masisi territory, the situation remained volatile as well, with the continued activities of ethnically based Congolese armed groups and the ongoing activities of FDLR. On the other hand, the Beni area has seen a sustained period of relative calm, due mainly to the limited activities of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) during the reporting period.

27. In South Kivu, Congolese armed groups continue to pose a security threat, especially in Fizi, Kalehe, Shabunda and Uvira territories. Their involvement in customary succession issues as well as in intercommunal and transhumance-related disputes in Kabare, Kalehe, Fizi, and Uvira territories, has markedly increased. Uvira territory was particularly affected by a rise in intercommunal conflicts and the spillover of the crisis in Burundi. On 9 April, confrontations between members of the Bafuliru and Banyamulenge communities seeking to control a local chieftaincy enflamed tensions in Bijombo, Uvira territory. A growing number of civilians have been displaced to surrounding areas, including Tanganyika and North Kivu. In early May, a Twa delegation from Tanganyika arrived in Fizi territory to warn Bafuliru and Banyamulenge community members against incursions on their lands. MONUSCO received reports of recruitment of Burundi nationals by Congolese armed groups in the area; and in response, in late April, FARDC reinforced its presence near Bijombo.

28. In Ituri, the Forces de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri (FRPI) continued to pose the single greatest security threat to civilians. During the month of May alone, the group was involved in 31 instances of human rights abuses, including one summary execution and six rapes. From 11 to 16 March, MONUSCO and FARDC conducted a coordinated operation against FRPI, resulting in the destruction of three camps. In addition, Djugu and Mahagi territories have seen a rising number of violent disputes and conflicts over land and local power structures. In March, a land dispute in Djugu led to the death of one person and the destruction of 280 houses and two schools. In April, a conflict over customary chieftaincy in Mahagi resulted in the deaths of two people and the burning down of 250 houses. In Mambasa territory, FARDC has continued operations against Mayi-Mayi groups, aimed particularly at dislodging them from gold-mining sites. Instability also persisted along the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, in Ituri province. On 16 March, armed men attacked a FARDC post at Edipi.

29. In Haut-Uélé, attacks by elements of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and reported crossings of armed elements from South Sudan continue to impact the security situation. Within the context of the drawdown of the regional task force conducting the operation against LRA (including, notably, the United States Africa Command and the Ugandan People's Defense Force), isolated splinter groups of LRA have continued attacks and abduction of civilians in remote areas of north-western Haut-Uélé and in the northern part of Bas-Uélé, along the border with the Central African Republic. Attacks by LRA have been aimed primarily at furthering their efforts to poach and obtain supplies by raiding local communities.

30. On 11 June, when the main prison in Beni was attacked by unidentified armed elements, at least 900 prisoners escaped and 11 persons were killed. On 22 June, a series of coordinated attacks aimed at freeing high-profile prisoners in Beni was repelled by FARDC with the support of MONUSCO troops and police. At least nine people were killed as a result. These incidents are part of a series of incidents which started on 17 May when the Makala central prison in Kinshasa was attacked, allegedly by sympathizers of the Bundu Dia Mayala political party. The leader of the party, Ne Muanda Nsemi, escaped along with thousands of prisoners. Other prison breaks have occurred across the country in recent weeks, prompting some members of parliament to call for the resignation of key government ministers.

31. In its efforts to protect civilians and neutralize armed groups, MONUSCO was involved in two coordinated operations with FARDC against FRPI in Ituri, using a combination of framework brigade elements and special forces. The operations resulted in a rise in FRPI surrenders. In Haut-Uélé, from March to June, MONUSCO supported a FARDC operation against LRA. MONUSCO also strengthened the early warning network along the border with South Sudan by facilitating capacity-building workshops and donating solar-powered communication equipment to local protection committees in the most vulnerable areas. In addition, the Mission continued to provide logistical and tactical support to FARDC within the framework of Operation Red Kite, and donated 53 solar-powered kits and 800 water purifiers to enhance the anti-LRA response in very remote areas, in compliance with the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces.

32. In South Kivu and Tanganyika provinces, MONUSCO continued to support efforts to promote peaceful coexistence between communities. From 10 to 12 April, MONUSCO facilitated an interprovincial conference which was held to address conflicts related to transhumance in South Kivu, Maniema and Tanganyika. In North Kivu, between 20 and 27 March, the Mission supported a series of dialogues among local authorities in order to address rising intercommunal tensions between Nande and Hutu communities in Rutshuru territory. The Mission also established a standing combat deployment in Munguli in the period from 21 to 26 May to protect a camp of internally displaced persons within the context of clashes between Mayi-Mayi Mazembe and Mayi-Mayi Nyatura militia.

33. In North Kivu, in collaboration with FARDC, the Mine Action Service of the United Nations supported the destruction of explosive items and ammunition from a recently discovered ammunition cache belonging to the former Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) armed group in Rutshuru territory. This was the fourth M23 ammunition cache found in North Kivu since 2016. Over 6,000 explosive items, including projectiles, mortars and rockets, have been destroyed to date. Response by the Mine Action Service to 43 requests to remove explosive ordnance across the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo resulted in the destruction of 577 weapons and over 7,600 explosive items. Despite these efforts, during the reporting period, 16 people were reportedly killed by explosive remnants of war in North Kivu.

Disarmament, demobilization and reinsertion, and related activities

34. From 10 March to 31 May, MONUSCO received 163 male and five female Congolese combatants across the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Fifty-seven per cent were combatants of FDLR and Mayi-Mayi Nyatura, 18 per cent were members of other Mayi-Mayi groups and 16 per cent were members of Raia Mutomboki. The majority of those former combatants opted to enter the Programme national de désarmement, démobilisation et réintégration phase III (PNDDR III). In addition, MONUSCO received and repatriated to Rwanda 79 foreign combatants (78 male and 1 female), the majority from FDLR-FOCA. Most notably, on 12 March, 18 members of FDLR, including the second in command of FDLR Grand-Nord, surrendered with 17 weapons.

35. MONUSCO continued to provide reinsertion support to the PNDDR III camps in Kamina and Kitona where, as of 31 May, 904 male and 13 female former combatants were receiving vocational training. In addition, in the period from 18 to 27 April, MONUSCO supported the transfer of 107 Kata Katanga elements, who had surrendered to the Government in Haut Katanga in 2016, from Lubumbashi to the Kamina camp. MONUSCO also continued to provide support to 297 FDLR elements, including one woman and 1,067 dependants (13 men, 242 women, 415 boys and 397 girls), in the FDLR voluntary disarmament programme camps of

Kanyabayonga and Walungu, as well as to the Government-managed camp in Kisangani. In addition, MONUSCO continued to provide support to 610 elements of the South Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), including one woman, accommodated by MONUSCO in Dungu and Goma.

Stabilization

36. MONUSCO continued to support area-based stabilization efforts under the aegis of the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS), facilitating coordination among the Government, international partners, civil society and the United Nations country team. The Mission supported the launch of five additional stabilization programmes in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri, targeting root causes of conflict through in-depth gender-sensitive conflict analyses and mitigation measures, while fostering political engagement through the development of the first compact by the Mission with the provincial government of South Kivu. MONUSCO also continues to advocate for the revision and effective application of the 2005 legal framework for election security, in line with the 31 December 2016 agreement.

Regional developments

37. Countries of the region pursued efforts to address political and security challenges, particularly the continued threat posed by armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The seventeenth meeting and retreat of the Technical Support Committee of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo was held in Naivasha, Kenya, on 4 and 5 May 2017. The focus of the retreat was on means for improving the efficiency and performance of the Committee. Recommendations centred on strengthening confidence among countries and ensuring effective follow-up of progress in the delivery of Framework commitments, notably through good offices initiatives by the guarantors, bilateral engagement among regional leaders and enhanced cooperation at the technical level.

38. There was some modest progress in relation to SPLM/A-IO in MONUSCO premises. On 14 April, eight SPLM/A-IO elements in MONUSCO premises voluntarily repatriated to Juba, in the presence of the Vice-Minister of Defence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Ambassador of South Sudan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, representatives of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism and officials of MONUSCO.

C. Human rights situation

39. MONUSCO documented the continuing deterioration of the human rights situation, with 1,444 human rights violations committed from March to May, in comparison with 888 violations recorded in January and February. Of those, 287 human rights violations occurred in the three Kasai provinces, Tanganyika, and Kongo Central. Armed groups perpetrated 574 human rights violations, while State agents were responsible for 870, with 23 per cent of violations perpetrated by FARDC and 26 per cent by the national police. At least 437 victims of extrajudicial and arbitrary killings, including 43 women and 67 children, were registered during the period under review. Of those 437 victims, 304, including 27 women and 64 children, were killed by State agents; and 133, including 16 women and three children, by armed groups.

40. The trend towards maintaining a restricted democratic space persisted, with increasing violations of civil and political rights, particularly freedom of peaceful

assembly, of opinion and of expression. Political opponents, civil society activists and journalists were the main targets. During the period under review, MONUSCO documented 245 cases of human rights violations linked to restrictions of democratic space throughout the country, as compared with 99 such violations in the first two months of 2017. While a general ban on public demonstrations was maintained, pursuant, reportedly, to the instructions of the Minister of the Interior, it was imposed differentially based on political affiliation.

41. MONUSCO documented 148 cases of human rights violations in the three Kasai provinces, resulting in at least 292 civilian casualties, including 21 women and 63 children, of which 249 killings were reportedly perpetrated by FARDC. There have been continuing reports of massive recruitment of children by the Kamuina Nsapu militia, as well as killings, destruction of property and looting. Those reports also indicate the use of disproportionate force by State agents in the conduct of military operations against the militia. A total of 42 alleged mass graves were identified in the area. MONUSCO transmitted Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates of their presumed locations to military justice, which has yet to initiate an investigation.

42. To date, national authorities have yet to launch investigations related to allegations of serious human rights violations communicated to them by MONUSCO. On 22 May, a modest first step was taken, as represented by a joint mission led by military justice in coordination with MONUSCO in the Nganza commune of Kananga, where MONUSCO had previously documented human rights violations and abuses reportedly perpetrated by law enforcement and security forces. The main objective of the mission was to assess the situation and contribute support to the opening of a military judicial investigation. One of the only trials related to developments in the Kasai provinces was held from 16 to 19 May, in Bilomba, Kazumba territory, Kasai Central, where the Kananga military court held a mobile hearing related to prosecution of 10 FARDC soldiers from the 2101 regiment and two national police officers accused of robbery, fraudulent concealment and violation of instructions. While one national police agent was acquitted by the court, the other defendants were convicted and sentenced to prison terms ranging from 45 days to seven years. Also during this period, in Mbuji-Mayi, the military court of Kasai Oriental commenced the trial of nine FARDC soldiers on charges of having committed war crimes in Mwanza Lomba.

43. On 9 June, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights called upon the Human Rights Council to launch an international investigation into the grave human rights violations and abuses that had been perpetrated in Kasai Central and Kasai Oriental provinces, noting that their nature and scale, as well as the consistently inadequate responses of the domestic authorities, had obliged him to call for an international investigation as a complement to national efforts. On 23 June, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution in which the Council requested the High Commissioner to appoint a team of international experts to investigate these allegations, in cooperation with the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

44. A total of 178 people are being detained at the Kananga central prison for their alleged affiliation to Kamuina Nsapu militias. Among them are 152 civilians, including one woman, 25 national police agents and one FARDC soldier. Further, 18 civilians, including 10 women and two national police agents, also arrested for their alleged affiliation with the militia, were reportedly released.

45. There continued to be strict adherence to the human rights due diligence policy with regard to all support provided by MONUSCO to Congolese security and defence forces.

Sexual violence

46. Seventy-five adults were reported to have been victims of conflict-related sexual violence, including one man, during the period under review, which represented a decrease compared with the first two months of 2017, during which at least 111 women and girls had been victims of such violence. Armed groups were responsible for 72 per cent of those incidents, while State agents were responsible for 28 per cent. During the period under review, Twa militia members (responsible, with 17 victims, for 23 per cent of violations) were the main perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence. Among State actors, members of FARDC remained the main perpetrator, with 17 per cent of violations attributable to them. Other perpetrators included FRPI combatants (20 per cent) and various Mayi-Mayi groups (10 per cent). Most of the cases were registered in North Kivu and Tanganyika provinces ((39 per cent and more than 25 per cent, respectively).

Child protection

47. During the reporting period, MONUSCO documented 527 cases of grave violations of child rights. At least 269 children were separated or escaped from armed groups, including 14 girls. The main armed groups that recruited and used children were Kamuina Nsapu, Raia Mutomboki, Nyatura, FRPI and Union des patriotes pour la libération du Congo (UPLC).

48. In the Kasai provinces, militia groups, including Kamuina Nsapu, have systematically recruited and used children in combat against FARDC. MONUSCO documented 28 new cases of child recruitment by Kamuina Nsapu militia, including eight girls, over the reporting period. MONUSCO also documented the killing of at least 59 children, including 25 girls, and the maiming of 44, including four girls, amidst the violence perpetrated since March. In addition, eight girls were subjected to sexual violence: in two cases, the perpetrators were members of armed groups and in six, the perpetrators were State agents. Since September 2016, MONUSCO has documented 646 attacks on schools in the Kasai provinces by Kamuina Nsapu militia. FARDC used four schools for military purposes; but the schools were vacated following advocacy by MONUSCO. In addition, in Kananga, MONUSCO advocated (with FARDC) the designation of focal points for child protection and (with the military prosecutor) the bringing of perpetrators of grave child rights violations to justice. Following these efforts, MONUSCO screened and secured the release from detention of over 100 children, including one girl.

D. Humanitarian and economic situations

49. The humanitarian situation in the Kasai region deteriorated significantly during the period owing to intensifying clashes between FARDC and the Kamuina Nsapu militia. A total of 1.3 million people were internally displaced as of early June, representing a 26 per cent increase in the course of month. On 25 April, humanitarian actors launched a flash appeal for \$64.5 million to enable a response to the most pressing needs of some 731,000 extremely vulnerable people during the following six months. The number of Congolese refugees entering Angola in their flight from the violence in the Kasai provinces had reached some 30,000 people by mid-June, with new refugees arriving daily. As of early June, there were 467,473 refugees in the country, mostly from Burundi, the Central African Republic, Rwanda and South Sudan. By mid-June, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had registered 77,356 South Sudanese refugees, with the majority settled close to the border with South Sudan in the Dingu and Faradje territories, Haut-Uélé province.

50. Insecurity continues to hamper humanitarian access in parts of Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Kasai, Kasai Central and Lomami. Funding for aid failed to keep pace with growing humanitarian needs. As at 19 May, the Humanitarian Response Plan was funded at slightly less than 20 per cent (\$155 million out of the \$812 million needed). In consequence, several non-governmental organizations were compelled to suspend their provision of assistance.

51. On 11 May, national health authorities reported a new outbreak of Ebola virus disease in Likati, Bas-Uélé province, to the World Health Organization. As of mid-June, a total of five confirmed and three probable cases had been reported. Four of the victims survived and four died. MONUSCO and the United Nations system are providing support to the Government, including through the establishment of a logistical support bridge into the remote Likati territory. Preventive measures have been taken to reduce the risk of the spread of the disease across the border with the Central African Republic, from which approximately 7,000 people have fled into the northern Democratic Republic of the Congo. MONUSCO also developed its own contingency plans.

52. The macroeconomic trend continued, and amid concerns about low foreign reserves, the Congolese franc has rapidly depreciated, by 17 per cent, since January 2017. The deteriorating socioeconomic situation contributed to the holding of a general strike of civil servants and public companies on 5 April, with moderate participation observed in Kinshasa and some provincial capitals. On 12 April, the International Monetary Fund decided to condition financial support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the stabilization of the political situation. On 16 May, the Prime Minister, Bruno Tshibala, pledged to stabilize the country's economic situation and improve the business climate, develop the agricultural sector, create employment opportunities, especially for women and youth, and improve delivery of social services. On 26 May, the forecast for growth in 2017 of gross domestic product (GDP) was revised downward to 3.5 per cent from the previous figure of 4.9 per cent. On 15 June, the National Assembly adopted the country's budget for 2017-2018 in the amount of \$7.9 billion.

III. Deployment of MONUSCO and implementation of its mandate

53. As requested by the Security Council in its resolution 2348 (2017), MONUSCO has taken steps to reduce the number of its military personnel to 16,215. This objective will be attained with the repatriation, by 31 August, of an infantry battalion of the North Kivu brigade and the additional repatriation of 76 staff officers and military observers. Similarly, in line with the request of the Council, there is a continuation of efforts to transform the MONUSCO Force. The Mission's second rapidly deployable battalion became operational during the reporting period, allowing the Force in North Kivu to minimize its static footprint and increase its agility and responsiveness. In addition, MONUSCO is actively pursuing the deployment of a military threat assessment unit, which will provide significantly improved information and situational awareness. Efforts to increase the Mission's formed police units through inter-mission cooperation, as requested by the Council, are ongoing. Issues regarding the specific conditions under which such an increase could be achieved are being examined before a formal request for support is submitted to the Council. Further adjustments of the military and civilian components of MONUSCO will be undertaken during the strategic review requested by the Council, which would pave the way for the phased and progressive exit of the Mission.

54. MONUSCO continued to prepare for and proactively address risks linked to the electoral process. Contingency plans, including at field office level, remain in place. The Mission continues to maintain three military companies and two formed police units in Kinshasa in order to provide a patrolling capacity and contribute to the protection of civilians and United Nations staff, as well as premises. Moreover, with the arrival of two rapidly deployable companies in Kananga, Kasai Central, the Uruguay battalion, which constitutes the Force reserve and which was deployed to the area temporarily, has been relieved by a Pakistan battalion. As a result, the Force reserve in Goma has now been reconstituted so as to allow for future redeployment to areas of emerging threats. The MONUSCO police component continues to provide training to the national police on public order management and respect for human rights. It is also developing plans for the training of key units of the national police, including the Légion nationale d'intervention and the Groupe mobile d'intervention, which could contribute significantly to electoral security, the protection of civilians and respect for human rights and political space.

55. The Mission continued its efforts to reinforce the capacity of its partners to promote and protect fundamental freedoms and monitor human rights violations and restrictions on political space. Since March, MONUSCO has organized or participated in at least 53 capacity-building activities for more than 2,000 persons, mainly civil society activists, journalists, politico-administrative authorities, national police officers and political actors, throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

IV. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

56. MONUSCO continued to implement strong prevention actions, including training programmes for personnel, risk assessments of bases and camps, military police deterrent patrols, and enforcement of strict curfew and out-of-bounds regimes. The Mission is establishing further community-based complaint mechanisms to improve its prevention and enforcement capacities, notably in locations at a pronounced risk for sexual exploitation and abuse. Twelve allegations of perpetration of acts of sexual exploitation and abuse were recorded during the reporting period. Efforts are ongoing to broaden assistance and support to victims, including through engagement with national authorities and organizations.

V. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

57. In addition to the killing of Michael Sharp and Zaida Catalán, our two colleagues of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, some 142 security and safety-related incidents affecting 13 female and 63 male United Nations personnel were reported, compared with 75 in the previous reporting period. These included 59 criminal incidents involving the targeting of both national and international personnel, 16 cases linked to civil unrest, 58 hazard-related cases and nine incidents related to armed conflict. The heightened political tensions and MONUSCO support to FARDC operations against armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo could lead to threats to United Nations personnel and installations.

VI. Observations

58. Six months ago, when Mr. Kabila's second and final term came to an end, the signing by all key Congolese stakeholders of the 31 December 2016 agreement helped to avert a potentially serious crisis. Beyond that initial and positive step,

however, months of follow-up discussions among political actors have delivered neither the speedy implementation of the agreement the Congolese people had hoped for, nor the all-inclusive transitional arrangements they had the right to expect. In addition, a new Government has been inaugurated without the participation of the Rassemblement opposition platform, which was among the main signatories of the agreement. As violence worsens in the once peaceful western part of the country, while long-standing instability remains in areas of the eastern part, I am increasingly concerned that the volatility associated with this combination of political hurdles and security threats in the midst of a difficult economic situation could derail the plans to hold elections in six months. This possibility, in turn, would put the entire political transition at risk, fuelling discontent, frustration and possibly violence. Unless political actors demonstrate renewed good faith and political will to deliver on the promises they made to their people on New Year's Eve, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is set to enter yet another highly uncertain and potentially precarious period.

59. Halfway through the transition period, which began on 1 January, I once again strongly urge all stakeholders to adopt — as they have agreed to do — a collaborative and consensual approach to the full implementation of the agreement, with the aim of holding free, fair, peaceful and credible elections by December 2017. This entails intensifying efforts to ensure the inclusivity of all signatories of the agreement in respect of its implementation, and especially in the process leading to the appointment of the Chair of the National Council for Overseeing the Electoral Agreement and Process. However, dialogue among political actors must not become an end in itself but rather a means for translating the agreements reached into concrete and meaningful actions aimed at delivering peace and stability for the country.

60. I further call upon partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to continue to support genuine efforts by national stakeholders towards achieving the full implementation of the Agreement. I reiterate my call to countries that four years ago signed the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo to work towards the goal of achieving durable peace and stability across their region. I urge international partners, including members of the Security Council, to remain united and committed in sending clear messages on the need for the expeditious implementation of the 31 December agreement and the holding of elections. While preserving the stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is first and foremost the responsibility of its leaders and people, the international community should continue play an active role as well.

61. I commend the Independent National Electoral Commission for the progress made, with the active support of MONUSCO and other partners, in respect of the voter registration process. The registration so far of over half of the eligible voters is a welcome development. These efforts must continue and the process must remain on track, including through ensuring that no eligible voters are disenfranchised through an incomplete process, notably in the Kasaï Central and Kasaï provinces where the process has not yet commenced. I further encourage the Commission to issue the long-awaited electoral calendar, which would provide clarity on the steps ahead and allow partners, including the United Nations, to better determine the type of support they need to provide. I strongly encourage the Congolese authorities to fully implement without further delay the confidence-building measures agreed upon months ago. These will contribute greatly to the establishment of conditions conducive to the holding of credible and peaceful elections. I take note of the authorities' repeated commitment over the past months to funding the upcoming electoral cycle, which it is estimated by the Commission will cost \$1.3 billion. Despite the budgetary difficulties facing the Government, it remains crucial that the

promised funds be disbursed as scheduled so as to ensure that the electoral process proceeds as planned. Along the same lines, I call upon external partners to provide the technical and financial support for the holding of these important elections.

62. I remain seriously concerned by the spread of insecurity in the western Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly across the Kasai region, and the persisting instability across numerous areas of the eastern part of the country. This new landscape of instability poses serious threats to a growing number of civilians. Many are once again being forced into a situation of displacement, including in areas that had experienced a measure of stability in recent years. The spreading violence continues to stretch the operational capacity of national security and defence forces, notably in areas where challenges to State authority have been rapidly increasing. I call upon all actors involved in the continuing violence to lay down their arms and find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

63. I am deeply troubled by the continued increase in human rights violations, including reports that 42 alleged mass graves have been identified in the Kasai provinces, coupled with a lack of progress in combating impunity. The situation is such that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has called for the establishment of an independent international investigation on the human rights situation in the Kasai provinces. The Government is bound by the international human rights and humanitarian treaties and norms that it has adhered to voluntarily, including those related to the conduct of military operations against armed groups. It must hold its security forces to the highest standards in this regard. I strongly condemn attacks by the Kamuina Nsapu militia against civilians, electoral workers, government institutions, traditional authorities and security forces. I am concerned by the lack of tangible progress regarding the investigations into the alleged grave violations of human rights in the Kasai provinces involving members of the security forces as well as the Kamuina Nsapu militia. I call upon the Congolese authorities to act with swiftness in regard to conducting investigations and judicial proceedings so as to bring the perpetrators of human rights violations to justice and combat impunity. There can be no sustainable solution to violence without accountability.

64. On 12 March, amid the deteriorating situation in Kasai Central, the United Nations lost two of its own, Zaida Catalán and Michael Sharp, our colleagues of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Zaida and Michael were killed while seeking to deepen our common knowledge of the tragedy unfolding in that region and across the country. Their aim was to help bring peace to its people. My thoughts and those of the entire United Nations family go out to their families and loved ones. I urge the Congolese authorities to complete a thorough and credible investigation into their killing, and to bring to justice all those who share responsibility for this crime. I am determined to do the utmost in this regard. Already, in line with the Organization's policies, a Board of Inquiry is currently investigating the circumstances of the killing of our colleagues.

65. MONUSCO has made progress in adjusting its priorities and posture with respect to supporting the implementation of the 31 December 2016 political agreement and improving its response to existing and emerging security challenges. The strategic review requested by the Security Council will provide MONUSCO with further recommendations, including on how to adapt the Mission's mandate to specific needs in the post-elections phase. With a strong focus on the political process, MONUSCO, in coordination with the United Nations country team and the international community, will continue to support the implementation of the agreement, which still charts the clearest path towards both the holding of elections and stability. My Special Representative, supported by my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, will continue through his good offices to garner national,

regional and international support for the advance towards credible, inclusive and peaceful elections in the shortest time frame possible.

66. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my Special Representative, Maman Sambo Sidikou, for his tireless efforts in support of the achievement of peace and stability in the country. I pay tribute to the women and men of MONUSCO, the United Nations country team and troop- and police-contributing countries for their dedicated service in often difficult conditions. Their dedication and sacrifice are crucial in helping to make a difference for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I am also grateful to my Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, Saïd Djinnit, for his role in the subregion with respect to supporting the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My appreciation is also extended to the African Union, the Southern African Development Community, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the European Union, as well as other international and regional partners, including donors, and non-governmental organizations, for their invaluable support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



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Report of the Secretary-General concerning the credentials of the alternate representative of the Russian Federation on the Security Council

Pursuant to rule 15 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General wishes to report that he has received a letter dated 22 June 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations stating that Mr. Georgy B. Sherstnev has been appointed alternate representative of the Russian Federation on the Security Council.

In the opinion of the Secretary-General, that letter constitutes adequate provisional credentials.

